



# THE

## TRIANGLE

A PROJECTION OF THE COMMUNAL TRIANGLE

Ashoka Mehta

Kusum

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"The story of the rise and progress of the British power in India possesses peculiar fascination for . . . it lays bare the defects in the character of the native races which made their subjugation possible. It indicates the trusting and faithful nature, the impressionable character, the passionate appreciation of great qualities, which formed alike the strength and weakness of those races".

—Colonel Malleon in "Decisive Battles in India".



## PREFACE

The importance of the Simla Conference lies not in any achievements but in that it constitutes a definite milestone in the history of the Indian National Congress. We have passed several such milestones, the last being in August 1942. It is amazing really how much the situation has changed since then, for Simla Conference was the complete antithesis of the Congress stand in '42 in spirit, approach and action.

The journey, after the exciting but short-lived August revolt, was dotted with several important but barren events --momentous while they occurred but almost ludicrous in results. In February '43 Mahatma Gandhi fasted for twenty-one days in the Aga Khan's Palace when the Bureaucracy looked on purposefully while the nation looked on helplessly. In May '43 came Gandhiji's release -- thanks to Malaria and Hookworm and not to any effort of the people. Immediately there were clear indications of a reversal of '42 policy. Gandhiji made an effort to break the deadlock in light of his new approach and offered definite plank for compromise through Stuart Gelder, the 'News Chronicle' correspondent, but it left the Government unmoved. In September-October of the same year came the Gandhi-Jinnah talks which were so pregnant with historical possibilities that even every reporter, who waited on Mr. Jinnah's lawn in those days, began to feel himself a historical character. And then nothing happened till Lord Wavell's sudden flight to London in March '45. The greatest surprise of the period just covered was the way responsibility for August disturbances was kicked about from door to door. No one was willing to own the baby. The naive layman had expected the Congress would rush to clasp it to its bosom. Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel have, however, since then reversed the policy to a great extent.



A mere narration of events since Lord Wavell's return and subsequent pronouncement could now serve little purpose except as a record and a reference. Records of failures are, however, usually distasteful to most parties. For these there is a lighter side to it which amuses. This is the human side expressed in the so-called public statements and opinions, the soaring hopes, the gleeful speculations, the juicy denunciations, the confident forecasts, the triumphs, defeats and disappointments which are individually all so very personal but which, nevertheless, affect the fate of four hundred million people in that impersonal and collective manner, called political. This side is always there, but during events like the Simla Conference it presents itself in a concentrated form, made easy for presentation.

A. M.

K. N.

## CHAPTER I

### THE BACKGROUND

Lord Wavell has gone to England again. What is the purpose of his visit? Will the wheels of India's destiny move on? Is the Indian deadlock going to be solved? Need the country be on tenter-hooks again? Are big things in the offing? Such questions are uppermost in every mind.

A careful study of the Conference convened by Lord Wavell recently at Simla will enable us to survey the new developments in their proper focus. The lessons of the Simla Conference have to be deeply imbibed if we are not to become victims of another farce.

The Viceroy has gone to England to make another attempt to resolve the Indian deadlock. Some months back it was the fashion in Delhi and the Whitehall to deny the existence of the deadlock. Maxwell and Amery pooh poohed any suggestion of a constitutional impasse in India and proudly asserted that His Majesty's Government was being carried on. The tragic procession of Bengal's dead meant nothing to them. The blackout of liberties in the country, the sagging of controls under corruption, the prevalence of suffocating climate in the country, made no difference to these distinguished administrators. At long last the logic of the situation has compelled them to face the realities.

It is now generally accepted that there is a deadlock, but it is not realised that (1) it is the creation of the British Government, and (2) it is not a war product. Even in 1939 the Congress was not interested in working the Constitution. It had entered the legislatures and formed ministries to "combat and end" the unwanted constitution. Since 1930 when the Congress declared for independence, the forces of Indian Nationalism and British Imperialism have been engaged in deadly combat. The events of the last fifteen years are varying expressions of the titanic

struggle. The Civil Disobedience campaigns of 1930 and 1932 dramatise the conflict. The sweeping victories gained by the Congress in the elections—the overwhelming success of the Congress that completely spoiled the finely devised game of the Imperialists; and that gave a dominant position to the Congress in a majority of the provinces even under a constitution that was specifically framed to keep the Congress out of the picture brought the conflict a step further. Lord Linlithgow's virtual acceptance of Gandhiji's proposals was an important achievement of the Congress.

The conflict re-emerged in a sharp form with the beginning of the war. In the war years, the Congress repeatedly demanded the clarification of British policy towards India. Only in an atmosphere of freedom was it prepared to lead the Indian people into the war. Two struggles and two proposals from the Government are the highlights of the period. Before the Wavell Plan, Lord Linlithgow had come out with his declaration in August 1940 and Sir Stafford Cripps had brought his proposals in March 1942. While both the plans failed to resolve the deadlock in the country they have left ugly legacies behind. Ostensibly offered as proposals advancing India along the road of self-Government, in fact they have put fresh hurdles in our path.

The declaration of August 1940, expanded the Governor-General's Executive Council, and gave Indians, nominated by the Viceroy, a majority on it. This advance was more than negated by the simultaneous conferring of a veto-power on the Muslim League. That declaration has become the sheet-anchor of the League's policy. The Cripps' proposals, while they have failed to advance India an inch forward, have created the background for partitioning India. There is nothing new in these developments. Every time the British have been compelled to make concession to Indian Nationalism, they have tagged on to it a counterpoise. The popular upsurge of 1905-1907 led to the Morley-Minto Reforms. This instalment of Reforms was, however, vitiated by the introduction of separate electorates for the Muslims. In 1919, out of the stress of the war years,

there emerged the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms. The political concessions were negated by the extension of separate electorates not only to communities other than the Muslims, but to classes, races, communities and sub-communities. Every possible distinction, whether based on race, religion, class or sex was exploited to break up the unity of the Indian people. In 1935 composite provinces, like the Bombay Presidency, were so broken up as to divide India into predominantly Hindu and Muslim zones.

Repeated efforts on the part of Indian Nationalism to remove the fissures from the body politic of the country were frustrated by the Machiavellian cunning of the rulers. The most famous instance is the sabotaging of the Unity Conference (1933) by Sir Samuel Hoare, the then Secretary of State for India. The growing forces of Nationalism have baffled over and over again, by the strengthening of communalism by the rulers.

For a fruitful estimate of the Wavell Conference it is necessary to have this background in mind. Does the Conference conform to this old pattern? If it does, any hope of a peaceful solution of the Indian problem is in vain.

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## CHAPTER II

### ON THE EVE

Speculation had naturally started ever since Lord Wavell's visit to London in March, 1945 but it became really serious and more to the point only after his return.

On June 1st, Wavell left for India and the papers carried Reuter's message from London to say:

"There are high hopes in political circles that Lord Wavell, who left for India today, after discussions with the British Cabinet, may have been given the authority to explore anew the possibilities of resolving the political deadlock in India and of making a fresh attempt to secure the co-operation of Indian leaders and parties in the administration".

On his arrival in New Delhi on June 5th, the only news he made was:

## **"WAVELL IN NEW DELHI"**

### **"Presides Over Executive Council Meeting"**

Over a week elapsed before the much-awaited announcement came. Meanwhile, speculative political and special correspondents got fairly near to the real thing and naturally caused reactions which are interesting to record in the light of the amazing swing-over later. Mostly mere headlines picked up from the press at random will suffice. It will be noticed that the reception was extremely cool in Panchgani quarters.

Headlines and reports read as follows:

Panchgani, June 8—"Press reports and speculations about Lord Wavell's proposals for a settlement have not evoked any reaction among Congress circles here. No one expects any spectacular announcement; in fact, it may be said that no one will be surprised at Lord Wavell's proposals".

—'Hindu', Madras.

Panchgani, June 9—"Scepticism in Congress Circles".

—'Hindu', Madras.

Panchgani, June 9—"Strength of Congress Under-rated".

"Panchgani Sceptical about New Offer of Lord Wavell".

—'Hindustan Standard', Calcutta.

Panchgani, June 10—"Panchgani Reactions to Wavell's Offer".

"Too Bad To Need Comment".

—'Hindustan Standard', Calcutta.

Panchgani, June 10—"Office Acceptance—Only in Terms of Independence".

"Mahatma Gandhi's View".

(in reply to Mr. Harekrishna Mehtab).

Panchgani, June 10—"Gandhiji Indifferent to Wavell Proposals".

"Congress to Reject Plan".

"The forecast about the Wavell Plan, published in the Press has been received in "Dilkusha" with no enthusiasm whatsoever. On the contrary Gandhiji, Dr. Syed Mahmud and Mr. Jairamdas treated these forecasts with indifference.

"However, it is learnt from usually reliable sources that the Wavell Plan, if it comes true to the forecast, is unlikely to meet the approval of either Mahatmaji, or the Congress.

"The main rock on which it founders, like the Cripps offer, is the veto power of the Governor-General. Gandhiji wants a real gesture, indicating a change of heart on the part of the British Government.

"The release of all political prisoners or at least the Members of the Congress High Command is considered to be the first requisite for any settlement."

—*"Amrita Bazar Patrika," Allahabad*

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### CHAPTER III

## *THE "PLAN"*

### LORD WAVELL'S BROADCAST

On June 14th His Excellency the Viceroy broadcast the following proposals:

"I have been authorised by His Majesty's Government to place before Indian political leaders proposals designed to ease the present political situation and to advance India towards her goal of full self-government. These proposals are at the present moment being explained to Parliament by the Secretary of State for India. My intention in this broadcast is to explain to you the proposals, the ideas underlying them, and the method by which I hope to put them into effect.

"This is not an attempt to obtain or impose a constitutional settlement. His Majesty's Government had hoped that the leaders of the Indian parties would agree amongst themselves on a settlement of the communal issue, which is the main stumbling block, but this hope has not been fulfilled.

**Invitation To Leaders**—"In the meantime, India has great opportunities to be taken and great problems to be solved which require a common effort by the leading men of all parties. I therefore propose, with the full support of His Majesty's Government to invite Indian leaders, both of Central and Provincial politics, to take counsel with me with a view to the formation of a new Executive Council more representative of organised political opinion. The proposed new Council would represent the main communities and

would include equal proportions of Caste Hindus and Moslems.

"It would work, if formed, under the existing constitution. But it would be an entirely Indian Council, except for the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief, who would retain his position as War Member. It is also proposed that the portfolio of External Affairs, which has hitherto been held by the Viceroy, should be placed in charge of an Indian Member of Council, so far as the interests of British India are concerned.

"A further step proposed by His Majesty's Government is the appointment of a British High Commissioner in India, as in the Dominions, to represent Great Britain's Commercial and other such interests in India.

**Selection of Members**—"Such a new Executive Council will, you realise, represent a definite advance on the road to Self-Government. It will be almost entirely Indian, and the Finance and Home Members will for the first time be Indians, while an Indian will also be charged with the management of India's foreign affairs. Moreover, members will now be selected by the Governor-General after consultation with political leaders, though their appointment will of course be subject to the approval of His Majesty the King Emperor.

"The Council will work within the framework of the present constitution, and there can be no question of the Governor-General agreeing not to exercise his constitutional power of control, but it will of course not be exercised unreasonably.

"I should make it clear that the formation of this Interim Government will in no way prejudice the final constitutional settlement.

**Main Tasks**—"The main tasks for this new Executive Council would be:—

"First, to prosecute the war against Japan with the utmost energy till Japan is utterly defeated.

"Secondly, to carry on the Government of British India, with all the manifold tasks of post-war development in front of it, until a new permanent constitution can be agreed upon and come into force.

"Thirdly, to consider, when the members of Government think it possible, the means by which such agreement can be achieved. The third task is most important. I want to make it quite clear that neither I nor His Majesty's Government have lost sight of the need for a long-term solution, and that the present proposals are intended to make a long-term solution easier.

"I have considered the best means of forming such a Council, and have decided to invite the following to Viceregal Lodge to advise me:

**The Invitees**—"Those now holding office as Premier in a Provincial Government, or, for Provinces now under Section 93 Government, those who last held the office of Premier.

"The leader of the Congress Party and the Deputy Leader of the Muslim League in the Central Assembly; the leaders of the Congress Party and the Muslim League in the Council of State; also the leaders of the Nationalist Party and the European Group in the Assembly.

"Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah as the recognised leaders of the two main political parties.

"Rao Bahadur N. Siva Raj to represent the Scheduled Classes.

"Master Tara Singh to represent the Sikhs.

"Invitations to these gentlemen are being handed to them today and it is proposed to assemble the Conference on 25th June at Simla, where we shall be cooler than at Delhi.

"I trust that all those invited will attend the Conference and give me their help. On me and on them will lie a heavy responsibility in this fresh attempt to make progress towards a final settlement of India's future.

**Provincial Ministries**—"If the meeting is successful, I hope that we shall be able to agree on the formation of the new Executive Council at the centre. I also hope that it will be possible for Ministries to reassume office and again undertake the tasks of Government in the provinces now administered under Section 93 of the Constitution Act and that these Ministries will be coalitions.

**If It Fails**—"If the meeting should unfortunately fail, we must carry on as at present until the parties are ready to come together. The existing Executive Council, which has done such valuable work for India, will continue if other arrangements cannot be agreed.

"But I have every hope that the meeting will succeed, if the party leaders will approach the problem, with the sincere intention of working with me and with each other. I can assure them that there is behind this proposal a most genuine desire on the part of all responsible leaders in the United Kingdom to help India towards her goal. I believe that this is more than a step towards the goal, it is a considerable stride forward and a stride on the right path.



**States Left Alone**—"I should make it clear that these proposals affect British India only and do not make any alteration in the relations of the Princes with the Crown Representative.

"With the approval of His Majesty's Government, and after consultation with my Council, orders have been given for the immediate release of the Members of the Working Committee of Congress who are still in detention. I propose to leave the final decision about the others still under detention as the result of the 1942 disturbances to the Central Government, if formed, and to the Provincial Governments.

"The appropriate time for fresh elections for the Central and Provincial Legislatures will be discussed at the Conference.

"Finally, I would ask you all to help in creating the atmosphere of goodwill and mutual confidence that is essential if we are to make progress. The destiny of this great country and of the many millions who live in it depends on the wisdom and good understanding of the leaders both of action and of thought, British and Indian, at this critical moment of India's history.

**Forgive and Forget**—"India's military reputation never stood higher in the world than it does at present, thanks to the exploits of her sons drawn from all parts of the country. Her representatives at international conferences have won high regard for their statesman-like attitude. Sympathy for India's aspirations and progress towards prosperity was never greater or more widespread. We have thus great assets if we can use them wisely. But it will not be easy, it will not be quick; there is very much to do, there are many pitfalls and dangers. There is on all sides something to forgive and forget.

"I believe in the future of India, and as far as in me lies will further her greatness. I ask you all for your co-operation and goodwill."

## **MR. AMERY'S STATEMENT**

While India listened to Lord Wavell, Mr. Amery, the then Secretary of State for India, made the following statement in the House of Commons:—

"During the recent visit of Field Marshal Viscount Wavell to this country His Majesty's Government reviewed with him a number of problems and discussed particularly the present political situation in India.

**The Background**—"Members will be aware that since the offer by His Majesty's Government to India in

March, 1942, there has been no further progress towards the solution of the Indian constitutional problem.

"As was then stated, the working out of India's new constitutional system is a task which can only be carried through by the Indian peoples themselves.

"While His Majesty's Government are at all times most anxious to do their utmost to assist the Indians in the working out of a new constitutional settlement, it would be a contradiction in terms to speak of the imposition by this country of self-governing institutions upon an unwilling India.

"Such a thing is not possible, nor could we accept the responsibility for enforcing such institutions at the very time when we were, by its purpose, withdrawing from all control of British Indian affairs.

"The main constitutional position remains, therefore, as it was. The offer of March '42 stands in its entirety without change or qualification. His Majesty's Government still hope that the political leaders in India may be able to come to an agreement as to the procedure whereby India's permanent future form of Government can be determined.

The Urgency—"His Majesty's Government are, however, most anxious to make any contribution that is practicable to the breaking of the political deadlock in India. While that deadlock lasts not only political but social and economic progress is being hampered.

"The Indian administration, over-burdened with the great tasks laid upon it by the war against Japan and by the planning for the post-war period, is further strained by the political tension that exists.

"All that is so urgently required to be done for agricultural and industrial development, and for the peasants and workers of India, cannot be carried through unless the wholehearted co-operation of every community and section of the Indian people is forthcoming.

"His Majesty's Government have, therefore, considered whether there is something which they could suggest in this interim period, under the existing constitution, pending the formation by Indians of their future constitutional arrangements, which would enable the main communities and parties to co-operate more closely together and with the British to the benefit of the people of India as a whole.

"It is not the intention of His Majesty's Government to introduce any change contrary to the wishes of the major Indian communities. But they are willing to make possible some step forward during the interim

period if the leaders of the principal Indian parties, are prepared to agree to their suggestions and to co-operate in the successful conclusion of the war against Japan as well as in the reconstruction in India which must follow the final victory.

**Slight Change in Act**—"To this end they would be prepared to see an important change in the composition of the Viceroy's Executive. This is possible without making any change in the existing statute law except for one amendment to the Ninth Schedule to the Act of 1935. That Schedule contains a provision that not less than three members of the Executive must have had at least ten years' service under the Crown in India. If the proposals meet with acceptance in India, that clause would have to be amended to dispense with that requirement.

**Hindu-Muslim Parity**—"It is proposed that the Executive Council should be re-constituted and that the Viceroy should in future make his selection for nomination to the Crown for appointment to his Executive from amongst leaders of Indian political life at the Centre and in the Provinces, in proportions which would give a balanced representation of the main communities, including equal proportions of Muslims and Caste Hindus.

"In order to pursue this object, the Viceroy will call into conference a number of leading Indian politicians who are the heads of the most important parties or who have had recent experience as Prime Ministers of Provinces, together with a few others of special experience and authority. The Viceroy intends to put before this conference the proposal that the Executive Council should be reconstituted as above stated and to invite from the members of the conference a list of names. Out of these he would hope to be able to choose the future members whom he would recommend for appointment by His Majesty to the Viceroy's Council, although the responsibility for the recommendations must, of course, continue to rest with him, and his freedom of choice, therefore, remains unrestricted.

**Conditions**—"The members of his Council who are chosen as a result of this arrangement would, of course, accept the position on the basis that they would wholeheartedly co-operate in supporting and carrying through the war against Japan to its victorious conclusion.

"The members of the Executive would be Indians with the exception of the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief, who would retain his position as War Mem-

ber. This is essential so long as the defence of India remains a British responsibility.

"Nothing contained in any of these proposals will affect the relations of the Crown with the Indian States through the Viceroy as Crown Representative.

"The Viceroy has been authorised by His Majesty's Government to place this proposal before the Indian leaders. His Majesty's Government trust that the leaders of the Indian communities will respond. For the success of such a plan must depend upon its acceptance in India and the degree to which responsible Indian politicians are prepared to co-operate with the object of making it a workable interim arrangement. In the absence of such general acceptance existing arrangements must necessarily continue.

**Coalitions in Provinces**—"If such co-operation can be achieved at the Centre it will no doubt be reflected in the Provinces and so enable responsible Governments to be set up once again in those provinces where owing to the withdrawal of the majority Party from participation, it became necessary to put into force the powers of the Governors under Section 93 of the Act of 1935.

"It is to be hoped that in all the Provinces these Governments would be based on the participation of the main parties, thus smoothing up communal differences and allowing Ministers to concentrate upon their very heavy administrative tasks.

**External Affairs**—"There is one further change which, if these proposals are accepted, His Majesty's Government suggest should follow:

"That is, that External Affairs (other than those tribal and frontier matters which fall to be dealt with as part of the Defence of India) should be placed in the charge of an Indian Member of the Viceroy's Executive so far as British India is concerned, and that fully accredited representatives shall be appointed for the representation of India abroad.

"By their acceptance of and co-operation in this scheme the Indian leaders will not only be able to make their immediate contribution to the direction of Indian affairs, but it is also to be hoped that their experience of co-operation in Government will expedite agreement between them as to the method of working out the new constitutional arrangements.

**Within Present Constitution**—"His Majesty's Government consider, after the most careful study of the question that the plan now suggested gives the utmost progress practicable within the present constitution.

"None of the changes suggested will in any way prejudice or prejudge the essential form of the future permanent constitution or constitutions for India.

"His Majesty's Government feel certain that given goodwill and a genuine desire to co-operate on all sides, both British and Indian, these proposals can mark a genuine step forward in the collaboration of the British and Indian peoples towards Indian self-Government and can assert the rightful position, and strengthen the influence of India in the counsels of the nations."

## FURTHER ELUCIDATION

On the following day Mr. Amery held a Press Conference, a report of which is reproduced:—

London, June 16—"At a Press Conference held at the India Office, on Friday afternoon, Mr. Amery, Secretary of State for India, did his best to explain to newspapermen, particularly to Americans, that the Viceroy's power of veto was intended only for exercising in the interest of India and not Britain.

"An Indian correspondent questioning Mr. Amery, asked: "There is a strong feeling in India that the dollar pool should be dissolved, which would be against British interests. Would the Viceroy veto such a measure?"

"That is just the kind of thing the Viceroy would not exercise his veto on", Mr. Amery replied, adding, "the British High Commissioner would put these points to the Council".

**An Agreed Policy**—Reuter adds: "Mr. Amery said he was glad to say that the proposals, which he had laid before Parliament yesterday and which Lord Wavell had announced at the same time, had met with very general approval in the press of all shades of opinion. They had of course represented an agreed policy between all the main parties in Britain. They were discussed in England, before the coalition broke up between Lord Wavell and members of the Government—Liberal, Labour and Conservative—and they were, therefore, an offer from the British people to the people of India.

**Very Utmost**—"I think that this offer represents the very utmost it is in our power to give" declared Mr. Amery, "Not that we might not wish to give everything straight-away, but we cannot do more at this moment without precipitating in India an internal conflict which would destroy hopes of further advance.

"The difficulty really is this. What is reserved in fact, is this reserve power of the Viceroy, on occasions, to overrule a majority decision of his council.

"Mr. Amery hastened to assure that the offer was not a 'take it or leave it' proposition.

**Protection for Minorities**—"By the actual law of India, the Government is normally carried on by the decisions of a majority of the Viceroy's Council. Under these proposals, if accepted, this would be a Council in which all the members except the Commander-in-Chief and the Viceroy would be Indians. This reserve power is one which, as the Act makes clear, is not in the interests of Britain but in the interests of India. Until there is a real democratic constitution in India, under which the various elements in India's national life feel they are secure and under which difficult constitutional problems are resolved as they are in Britain, by the method of election, there must be some reserve of arbitral power to protect certain minorities.

"Mr. Amery went on to say that the veto also existed to guard against unfair treatment of the interest of the States, pending such time as they also came into the future Indian Government.

**India's Power**—"In other words, it was India's power and was a power to be exercised in the interests of India and not a power imposed by Britain in order to protect British interests.

"In order to make that clearer, Government had decided to appoint in India, as in the British Dominions, a United Kingdom High Commissioner, who would discuss with departments of the Government of India such economic questions as they would wish to urge, negotiate treaties and get rid of the idea that the Viceroy, in his capacity as head of his Council, was using his influence to induce his Council to accept things which are in Britain's interest and not in India's interest.

"The British Government wanted to make it quite clear that the reserve powers of the Viceroy were not used in any sense against Indian interests, but existed to protect interests, in this interim period, until India could agree upon a future constitution, or if she could not agree upon a single constitution, upon constitutions for a divided India.

"This is reserve power and it is a power that has not once been used in the five years I have been Secretary of State. During all that time, in which there has been a large majority of Indian members of the Council, every decision has been taken by a majority of the

members of the Council and not under orders from here.

**Wide Influence**—"I don't think that has been clearly realized, either in the world in general or in India. If Indian leaders as a result of the new proposals, find themselves in the Viceroy's Council they will, I think, realise for the first time how wide are the powers which they enjoy.

"While these powers represented the utmost length that Britain could go, they went a very great length indeed.

"There is nothing in the proposals, if accepted, that will debar members of the Council from dealing with the whole problem of reconstruction entirely as they please. It will be for them to decide industrial, agricultural and health policy and so on. It will be in their power so far as British India is concerned, to decide who is to represent her as ministers in foreign capitals, and in which capitals India wishes to be represented.

"The proposals, if accepted, impose no real barrier or check upon India's freedom to pursue her own course, both at home and in the world. The checks, such as they are, are entirely concerned with difficulties in the Indian internal situation which, it was hoped, would be resolved before long.

"We hope the practical co-operation of Indian statesmen of all communities at the Council will make it easier for them to understand each other better and we hope before long to suggest ways and means for an approach to the ultimate constitutional problem.

"Three years ago, the Cripps offer proposed the setting up of the Constituent Assembly. That is one suggestion—there may be others."

## JAIL RELEASES

On the 15th of June, the Members of the Congress Working Committee still under detention were released while the Provinces lifted the ban on the Working Committee. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Mr. Shanker Rao Deo, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Acharya J. B. Kripalani, Babu Rajendra Prasad, and Acharya Narendra Deo were once again amongst the people after an absence of full 34 months and 6 days. That the country went delirious with joy is to put it mildly.

## CHAPTER IV

### REACTIONS

Lord Wavell's broadcast produced different reactions in different quarters. Mr. C. R. Attlee's unequivocal support to the plan in the House of Commons removed it as an election issue and strengthened the Viceroy's position considerably. His advice to Indians to "seize this opportunity," was reiterated by other Labour Leaders like Sir Stafford Cripps and Mr. Harold Laski.

Independent circles and individuals in India and abroad generally advocated the acceptance of the plan.

Mr. Jinnah went slow and refused to comment beyond the telegrams he exchanged with the Viceroy.

The Hindu Mahasabha leaders were furious at the concession of parity to the Muslims and at not having been invited, while the Nationalist Muslims objected strongly to being represented by the Muslim League.

#### IN CONGRESS CAMP

In the Congress camp, unaccountably, the atmosphere changed completely from one of suspicion and indifference to an eagerness to explore all possibilities for sincere co-operation. The omission of Maulana Azad's name from the list of the invitees threatened for some time to prove a major obstacle to the Congress participating in the proposed Conference. It was, however, promptly put right by the diplomatic Viceroy and the act was universally accepted as an unmistakable sign of his deep-sincerity and anxiety to see the plan through.

#### MAHATMA GANDHI'S STATEMENT

Mahatma Gandhi hailed the plan except for its linguistic inexactitude in reference to 'caste Hindu.' In a press statement issued on June 15th from Panchgani he said :

"On the purely political aspect of the Viceregal broadcast, I prefer to say nothing. Now that the members



of the Working Committee of the Congress are free, I can only give them my advice and it is they who have to shape the policy of the Congress and speak and act with authority. As soon as I read the broadcast, I sent a wire to His Excellency the Viceroy drawing his attention to the fact that I have no "locus standi" as the recognised representative of the Congress.

"That function belongs to the President of the Congress or whoever may be appointed to represent the Congress on a particular occasion. For several years I have acted unofficially as an adviser to the Congress whenever required. The public will remember that I went with the same unrepresentative character for my talks with Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah, and I can take up no other position with the British Government, in this instance represented by the Viceroy.

"There is one expression in the Viceregal broadcast which certainly offends my ear and, I hope, will offend that of every politically-minded Hindu. I refer to the expression "Caste-Hindu." I claim that there is no such person, speaking politically, as a "Caste-Hindu," let alone the Congress which seeks to represent the whole of India which is yearning after political independence. Does not Veer Savarkar or Dr. Shyam Prasad or Dr. Moonje of the Hindu Mahasabha represent all Hindus without distinction of caste? Do they not include the so-called untouchables? Do they themselves claim to be Caste-Hindus? I hope not.

"Of all politically-minded Hindus, I know that even the revered Pandit Malaviyaji, though he observes caste distinctions, will refuse to be called a Caste-Hindu, as distinguished from the other Hindus. The modern tendency in Hinduism is to abolish all caste distinctions and this I maintain in spite of my knowledge of reactionary elements in Hindu Society. I can only hope, therefore, that H. E. the Viceroy has allowed himself to make use of the expression in utter ignorance. I want to acquit him of knowingly wounding the susceptibilities of the Hindu society or dividing it.

"I would not have dwelt on this matter but for the fact that it touches the political mind of Hindus in its sensitive spot and carries with it political repercussions.

**His Part in Desai-Liaquat Pact**—"The proposed Conference can do much useful work if it is put in its proper political setting and is at the very outset rendered immune from any fissiparous tendency. Undoubtedly, all invitees might appear as Indians conjointly bent

on achieving India's natural goal and not as persons representing several sections of Indian society.

"That is how I have viewed the Bhulabhai-Liaquat Ali understanding which I suppose laid the foundation for the forthcoming Viceregal conference.

"Shri Bhulabhai Desai's proposal has no such colouring as the Viceregal broadcast would seem to have. I am not ashamed of the part I have played in advising Shri Bhulabhai Desai when he consulted me about his proposal. Shri Bhulabhai Desai's proposal, as I understood it, attracted me as one interested in solving the communal tangle, and I assured him that I would use my influence with the members of the Working Committee and give my reasons for acceptance of his proposal and I have no doubt that, if both parties to the proposal correctly represent their constituents and have independence of India as their common goal, things must shape well. At this point, I must stop and the Working Committee has to take up the thread. It is for its members to declare the Congress mind on the impending questions."

## FORGOTTEN AND FORGIVEN

This objection regarding the term Caste Hindu raised by Mahatma Gandhi was telegraphically explained by Lord Wavell to Gandhiji's satisfaction. This added yet another concrete instance to the Viceroy's already high credit of sincerity. In fact henceforward the sincerity of Lord Wavell plays an important role in press reports and Leaders' statements. Thus according to A.P. message dated Panchgani, June-15,—

"The sincerity of Lord Wavell and his genuine desire for a political settlement in India are recognised and appreciated in Congress circles."

Press reactions in other quarters were varied but the general tone was definitely for an all-out effort at co-operation with the British and through them or by their aid with the other obstinate minorities, specially the Muslim League. The strange confidence that Lord Wavell would do all in his power to accept and implement Congress offer of co-operation seems to have vaguely arisen from the tone of sincerity and spirit of accommodation contained in Lord Wavell's broadcast and subsequent correspondence,

and from the conviction that international forces were compelling Britain to part with India as a colony. It was sufficient to make even the Congress 'Forget and Forgive!'

## CHAPTER V

### CONGRESS DECISION

The Congress Working Committee met at Birla House on June 21 for the first time since '42. Maulana Azad presided. As one watched the members arrive and walk in one could not help wondering seriously whether their physical condition would not affect their mental decisions. It was in truth a "Sick Parade," as 'Free Press Journal' described it. Some of the members looked completely broken.

#### AUTHORISATION TO ATTEND

After a session of 13 hours in two days the Working Committee dispersed on June 22nd. It was one of its shortest sessions. The following statement was issued :—

"The Working Committee, meeting after nearly three years has to consider many important problems, both national and international.

"Members of the Working Committee, just released from prison, have not even had the opportunity to get into touch with our people and to acquaint themselves with the events which have taken place during the last fateful three years. However, in view of the existing circumstances, the Committee considered the proposals made by the Viceroy in regard to the Simla Conference fixed for 25th of June and it was decided that the President and other Congressmen invited to the Conference be authorised to attend.

"Certain directions have been given to them and they have been asked to seek elucidation in regard to many matters which still require clarification. It is probable that the Working Committee will meet again in the near future to consider these and other matters."

The members were asked to keep themselves in readiness to meet again at short notice. Directions were issued to

Congress ex-Premiers and others to attend the Simla Conference and the Viceroy was informed accordingly.

Mahatma Gandhi left for Simla by Mail. Maulana Azad flew by Air in a special R.A.F. plane which was placed at his disposal.

The centre of political interest shifted from Bombay to Simla.

### PANDIT NEHRU'S STATEMENT

In clarification of the decision of the Congress Working Committee it is worth recording Pandit Nehru's interview to Stuart Hensley of the U.P.A., given on June 21st.

Pandit Nehru said :—

"If this thing had been anything of a semi-permanent nature, it could not be looked at. The only reason why it can be considered is that it is a proposal for brief interim arrangements which would lead rapidly to Indian democratic freedom.

**Full of Difficulties**—"Even so, the interim proposals are full of difficulties and certain arrangements are suggested which would lead to complications.

"What the outcome of our Committee meeting, and any subsequent meetings may be, I cannot say.

"Ultimately we have to judge everything from the point of view of the All-India Congress Committee Resolution of August 8, 1942. The last part of that resolution, dealing with possible mass movement, does not apply now, but the rest of that Resolution lays down our fundamental policy and not even the Working Committee can change that. Only the All-India Congress Committee or a full session of the Congress can do so.

"Oddly enough, the All-India Congress Committee is still an illegal organization. It is very strange that people should think in terms of the Congress reviewing its policy when the main part of Congress organization is banned.

**1945 Not 1942**—"As has been said, 1945 is not '42 ! Much has happened in between in the world and in India. And in India, in spite of terrific repression, which continues in many ways, the spirit of the people has hardened and it is quite impossible to find a stable solution except on the basis of the complete freedom which we have always envisaged in terms of world co-operation.

"Thousands of our colleagues are still in prison. In a sense the present position in India can be compared to the unstable and changing situations that have arisen in many European countries freed from Nazi rule, and with the old resistance movements coming to the surface.

**Beware of False Steps**—"False steps taken at this stage may lead to all manner of new conflicts.

"We are apt to think too much in terms of the minority or communal problems. That is important but other problems, political and economic, are still more important.

"The question of future demobilization can also be really tackled only by a Free Indian Government. In 1918 and afterwards there were great difficulties and it will be remembered that there were many flare-ups in India then, which were ultimately canalized in the Congress' Non-Co-operation Movement of 1920 onwards.

"Obviously the situation will be much more critical on this occasion both because of the numbers involved and the vastly greater powers of resistance to enforced foreign rule that have arisen.

"For all these reasons and many others, temporary or interim arrangements have no real value except in so far as they lead rapidly to the creation of a Free Indian democratic State.

**Is It Worthwhile?**—"I am wholly unable to say what the outcome of the Simla Conference will be. At present the preliminary question is whether it is worthwhile attending it. The fact that the Viceroy said that it is a free conference which can be attended without commitments is helpful."

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## CHAPTER VI

### *AT SIMLA IN CONFERENCE*

At Simla, a seemingly great effort was made to turn the History of India but History of India refused to turn. Nationalist India has never been so hopeful, so earnest and so sincere and did absolutely nothing to merit the rebuff. Its fault was that it was not the sole master of the situation.

June 24th was the day of preliminary interviews. Maulana Azad, Mr. Jinnah, and Mahatma Gandhi all saw the Viceroy separately and were evidently satisfied. The surprising news of the day, however, was Mahatma Gandhi's decision not to attend the Conference but to remain in Simla in the capacity of an adviser. Congress circles are reputed to have been considerably impressed by Lord Wavell's friendly attitude to the Indian political question.

## ON THE VICEREGAL LAWN

On the 25th of June, shortly before 11 a.m., the delegates began to arrive at the Viceregal Lodge. According to "special correspondent" of the 'Free Press Journal':—

"Master Tara Singh's three-feet long Kirpan was the object of greatest attraction both, among members of the Conference and the band of journalists standing a little way off. In contrast to the tall and attractively-dressed, handsome Punjab Premier with his white fanned-out turban and the most informally dressed Rajagopalachari with his dark glasses on, could be seen among the invitees to the Conference Master Tara Singh who wore the blue Akali Turban and carried his long Kirpan as he moved along mingling with the distinguished leaders present there. When Lord Wavell and Lady Wavell shook hands with the Sikh representative he held the long Kirpan in his left hand as he extended the other for a handshake with them.

Talking and Talking—"A glance into the place where the leaders assembled before getting into the Conference room revealed some of them talking to each other and some with Lord Wavell. Beside Khizr Hyat Khan who was distinguished by his turban and size, Pandit Pant with his shattered health and little shaking head stood head and shoulders above the others to be rivalled only by the stout and stately figure of Lord Wavell who appeared in civilian dress with a red flower in the button hole.

"Bengal Premier Sir Nazimuddin looked "small" being of the shortest stature among the members of the Conference. Sir Ghulam Hussein Hidayatullah was conspicuous for his big body. The Pathan Premier Dr. Khan Sahib wore Pathan Chappals and was bare-headed when he shook hands with Lord Wavell. He appeared grave unlike Mr. Jinnah who, though did not bow like Khizr, smiled.

**Azad Grave**—"The President looked grave and burdened with the heaviest responsibilities: he was the last to meet the Viceroy and he responded to the cheerful smile of Lord Wavell in a typical Oriental fashion by bowing his head a little, and as is usual with him, waving his left hand.

"Of the groups which remained talking before the Conference room, groups which attracted the greatest attention were those of Mr. Jinnah, the Punjab Premier and Master Tara Singh on the one hand, and Rajaji and the Viceroy's Political Secretary on the other."

## IN CONFERENCE

The Morning session of the Conference discussed rules relating to procedure. In the afternoon Maulana Azad was the principal speaker. Throughout the Conference Maulana spoke in Hindustani.

"Maulana Azad in the course of his speech, it is gathered, focussed on the ultimate goal of complete independence as enunciated by the 1942 August Resolution of the A.I.C.C. and made it plain that the Congress looked at the Wavell proposals just as an interim arrangement which would not bind anybody to the future constitution of the country. But no interim arrangement could be isolated from the fundamental demand of the Congress and they must be taken together.

"As to the parity question, Maulana Azad is reported to have said that the Congress did not bother how many seats were given to which communities but it was interested in seeing "by which door these representatives come"—U.P.I. Message.

Maulana Azad is also understood to have made it clear that any settlement arrived at by the Congress leaders must be endorsed by the A.I.C.C. and as such it was essential to lift the ban on the Congress organization and release all A.I.C.C. members forthwith, as also other political prisoners.

Maulana's speech was followed by speeches by other party leaders. The session ended at 5 p.m. The same evening the delegates held conversations with their respective party leaders.

## PANT-JINNAH MEETING

On the 26th the Conference met again at 11 a.m. and adjourned at 12-30 after expressing a desire to confer amongst themselves. In this short session the Conference tentatively accepted the general principles of the Wavell Plan regarding the particular duties, scope and objectives of the Viceroy's Executive Council. The same evening at the request of Mr. Jinnah, Pt. Govind Vallabh Pant met Mr. Jinnah at Cecil Hotel. The discussion between the two leaders lasted 135 minutes, at the end of which, Pt. Pant told the Pressmen that he had no statement to make. Further Conference in both the Congress and the League Camps followed:

The Leaders' Conference met again on Wednesday morning only for one hour and was then adjourned until Friday morning at the request of Mr. Jinnah. The same afternoon Mr. Jinnah had a long interview with the Viceroy.

Meanwhile Pant-Jinnah talks remained inconclusive and the political atmosphere was surcharged with rumours of conflicting nature.

## CONFERENCE ADJOURNS

On Friday 29th the Conference met in a tense atmosphere when Azad and Jinnah informed the Viceroy that the Congress and League had failed to come to an understanding. The Viceroy then directed the party leaders to submit a panel of names for his consideration by 6th July and adjourned the Conference to 14 July. Before the conference was adjourned the leaders had agreed:

1. To prosecute the war effectively against Japan till victory is won.

2. To recommend for the new Executive Council men of ability and influence who are capable of taking decisions and assuming responsibility for carrying out such decisions.

3. To take steps, as soon as the new Executive Council is established, to solve the long-term problem—the future constitutional structure of India.

4. Till such time as the new constitution comes into force to work under the present constitution, and



5. To accept the explanation given by Lord Wavell in his broadcast speech and Mr. Amery in his speech in the House of Commons on the exercise of veto by the Viceroy.

The Conference voted on these five points and is reported to have accepted them. All the parties represented at the Conference, except the Muslim League, agreed to submit panel of names for the new Executive Council.

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## CHAPTER VII

### *THE INTERIM*

#### MR. JINNAH'S EXPLANATION

Mr. Jinnah explaining the stand he had taken at the Conference said:

"We have no illusions about this parity because on the Executive Council as proposed, the Muslim quota will not be more than one-third and, in the whole of the Executive Council, Muslims will be a minority of one-third. Whereas the Hindu quota will be in parity with Muslims, there will be Scheduled Castes representation and Sikh representation and we do not know yet which other community or communities will secure representation because the strength of the new Executive Council is yet to be determined."

Mr. Jinnah said that the Congress on any important matter will be safely entitled to count on the support of the Scheduled Castes and the Sikhs, and added,

"We are willing to make full contribution to any just and reasonable settlement. The Congress has already claimed the right to choose member or members from the Muslim 'bloc' and some other party or parties may make similar claims. While we have every desire to find a solution, this is a point, namely, that the Congress or any other body should be entitled to choose Muslims from the Muslim 'bloc' is one which we cannot accept either on principle or on facts as they are before us.

For Congress—"So is the case with regard to the composition which is yet to be determined. Now, as regards the Scheduled Castes, their real grievance is

of social tyranny and economic oppression in Hindu society, but with regard to political ideal or political goal, it is the same so far as the Scheduled Castes are concerned. So, the representative or representatives of the Scheduled Castes will not have any particular bias for us, although I repeat we have the fullest sympathy with them and we shall always be ready and willing to help them to improve their position socially and economically. Therefore, it follows that the Congress will on many important matters be safely entitled to count on their support.

"As regards Sikh representation, they are already opposed to dividing India and their political idea and goal are the same as those of the Congress. And so, they are not likely to have any particular bias for us.

"As to any other community, I do not know yet.

"Then there will be two British members, the Commander-in-Chief and the Viceroy. The composition of this Council will therefore be such as to enable the Congress invariably to command a majority.

"I know the Viceroy's veto is there and I know that Mr. Amery says that the veto will be exercised to protect minorities, but also I know that the Governor-General and Viceroy will be placed in a very invidious position if he were to exercise the veto constantly and as a normal business."

Mr. Jinnah declared:

"There is no adequate provision against the Congress forcing their decisions by a majority vote against the Muslim 'bloc'. Therefore, we will have to consider how to provide against this position.

99 per cent with the League.—"Mussalmans desire honestly to come to a settlement and not play with facts. And I do not think it can possibly be denied that 99 per cent of the Mussalmans of India are with the League. We have not lost a single by-election, except one that was in the early days of 1937, out of about 70 by-elections. The total number of Muslim members in all the Provincial Legislatures and the Central Legislature is somewhere about 600 and out of them there are only about 30 who are Congressite Muslims and who happened to be in one or other Provincial Legislature.

"I am told that in the Central Legislature, there is not a single Congressite Muslim from a Muslim electorate. There are two Muslims who have been returned by joint electorates. We maintain, therefore, that the Muslim League alone and nobody else is entitled to

give the names for the entire Muslim 'bloc' to the Viceroy. There cannot be unanimity in this world."

## PANDIT PANT'S RETORT

Jinnah's filibustering statement provoked Pt. Pant to retort that:

"As you know, the present scheme provides for parity. The number of non-Scheduled Hindus will be no more than that of the Muslims in the Council, although the actual proportion of Hindus to Muslims is three to one. The majority community will thus be distinctly in a minority in the Executive Council. It is just possible that about two-thirds of the representatives in the Executive Council may consist of minorities and only one-third may belong to the majority community.

Majority becomes Minority—"In the circumstances, it is unthinkable how the latter can over-ride the wishes of the former. In fact the majority community will be manifestly at the mercy of the minorities, and if there were conflicts between the interests of the two, it is the majority community that will stand in need of some safeguards under the proposed arrangement."

Replying to a question Pandit Pant said that he did not see why there should be a Muslim bloc as against the rest.

"I personally believe," he said, "that our interests are more or less identical and we should be able to work in complete harmony. I have no reason to doubt the sincerity of the professions of the Muslim League about independence being their goal. If that be so, I see no reason why fundamentally their outlook on problems as they come up from day to day should differ from other members of the Council.

"There is again no justification in holding that all other members of the Council will act in concert against the Muslims. In fact all Muslims or Hindus, need not hold the same view between themselves. But no Council can work satisfactorily unless members are determined to work in unison according to the best of their light for the material and moral welfare of all sections of the community.

"Ultimately, it is the individual citizen who counts and if we are really distressed over the present state of affairs and sincerely anxious to raise the general standard of life in this country, I personally believe that there will be no real cleavage on any communal or religious grounds inside the Council.

"In any case, the minorities will be in a majority and the majority community, whose strength is about three times that of the other minorities, will itself be in a minority in the Council and may not be more than a third of its total strength.

No Alternative—"If such a surrender by the majority community to the will and judgment of the minorities does not satisfy the latter, I do not know what more can be possible. One cannot find precedent for such reduction of a majority to such a minority position anywhere in the world."

Talking of the personnel of the Executive Council, Pandit Pant said:—

"It was essential that the members nominated should be those inspired by a common desire to raise the country to a position befitting its place under the sun with due regard to her vast numbers and ancient civilization.

"Passion for independence and for the improvement of the lot of the average citizen should be commonly shared by all the members."

## FACTS AND FIGURES

Professor Humayun Kabir further elaborated Pt. Pant's contention, when he said:

"In his Press conference Mr. Jinnah referred to the strength of the Muslim League Party in various legislatures. A correct indication of strength can be obtained only in a general election. In the last general election, the League obtained only four per cent of the Muslim votes cast, and no party or organization can honestly claim members except those returned on its own ticket. Since then, there have been some by-elections, but, as is well known, by-elections are no test of public-support. Even then, the League has not always won. In the Punjab, it lost to the Unionist Party in Dera Ghazi Khan, and in Sind to Khan Bahadur Maula Baksh of the Azad Muslim Party."

Prof. Kabir continued:

"A District Board election also offers some indication of public opinion. The electorate is almost the same as for the Assembly. In the District Board elections of Noakhali in Bengal, the League could not win more than half the Muslim seats. The Secretary of the District League forfeited his deposit. He was not the only League candidate who did so. The elec-

torate was no doubt joint, but it must be remembered that in Noakhali the Muslims are in an overwhelming majority and constitute about 80 per cent of the population. In the District Board elections in the Punjab, the League lost heavily in Sialkot and Sheikhupura, while it could not secure even one seat in Campbellpur.

"A more revealing instance is the last Calcutta Corporation elections. Here there was no joint electorate. It is true that the League won 17 out of the 32 seats, but out of the 11,000 and odd Muslim votes cast, the League secured only a little over 6,000 while the vote cast against the League were well over 4,000. This is the nearest approach we have had to General Elections in the recent past and it is well known that the League is much stronger in towns than in rural areas.

**Position in Legislatures.**—"So far as the position in the legislatures is concerned, the League has no majority in any of the Muslim majority provinces. We threw out the League Coalition Ministry in Bengal in spite of the fact that it had the support of the European Party and its proteges. The League could never have got into office in Bengal except for gubernatorial patronage and European backing.

"Only 39 members were originally returned to the Bengal Assembly on the League ticket and the genuine membership of the League Party there has never exceeded 43. This was the number in Opposition when Mr. Fazlul Huq formed his Progressive Coalition Ministry. About 30 Muslim members in the Bengal Assembly are constant supporters of the Government irrespective of which party is in power. Obviously they cannot be counted among members of the League or indeed of any political party.

"Nor has the League ever had a majority of the Muslim members in the Punjab. It is the Unionist Party which claims a clear majority and is a standing refutation of all League claims. The position in the Frontier is still worse for the League. The League was never in a position to form a Ministry except with the support of the Governor. The moment the Congress Party challenged its claim to office, it tumbled down with hardly any struggle.

**Fluid and uncertain.**—"In Assam and Sind, Party allegiances are fluid and uncertain. Even then, the present Ministry in Assam can continue only so long as the Congress Party chooses to keep it in office. If the Congress Party went into Opposition or even withdrew its support, Sir M. Saadulla would be forced to

go out. In Sind also, it is the support or toleration of the Congress Party which is keeping Sir Ghulam Hussain in Office. If the Congress had chosen to support Khan Bahadur Maula Baksh, it would have been he, and not Sir Ghulam Hussain who would have represented Sind in the Conference today.

"Of the four Muslim majority provinces, the Frontier is represented today in the Conference by a member of the Congress and the Punjab by a member of the Unionist Party. Sind is represented by Sir Ghulam Hussain, who holds his office at the pleasure of the Congress Party in the legislature, and has often changed his allegiance. The position of the Premier of Assam is identical with that of Sind. Bengal alone is represented by a member of the League. But he has hardly the right to speak on behalf of the province after his decisive defeat in the legislature."

### WORKING COMMITTEES MEET

The Congress and League Camps now got active as it was announced that the Working Committees of both the organizations were to meet in Simla. Pandit Nehru arrived in Simla on 1st July. His arrival revived hopes of Congress-League settlement. At the Press conference and earlier during the public speeches Nehru struck an optimistic note about the outcome of the Conference. "We of the Congress have not come here for a 'Tamasha': We have come here to see if we can find a way out of the present difficulties."

Next day Pt. Nehru met the Viceroy for 2½ hours. Their discussion was informal and covered large but varied grounds.

On the 3rd July the Congress Working Committee met and held discussions of a general character on the Wavell Plan. The same day Maulana Azad issued a statement to the Indian Muslims. He said:

"The Muslims of India should not think for a moment that the Muslims in the Congress are blind to the genuine doubts and grievances of the Muslims. Indeed, perhaps they realize this situation better than any one else. The point, however, is what should be the correct approach to remove these doubts and grievances?"

"The difference between the Nationalist Muslims and the Muslim League, is not of the ultimate aim which after all is the well-being and honourable existence of the Indian Muslims in a free India, but of methods to be used to achieve the desired end. And if we so desire, we can easily remove even this difference over our respective methods. What is needed is broad vision, large-heartedness and sincerity of purpose."

The Congress Working Committee resumed deliberations at 9 a.m. on the 4th July. Maulana Hussain Ahmed Madni attended the Conference by special invitation. There was another session of the Conference in the afternoon. At the conclusion of the day's deliberations the Congress President stated: "We met and discussed for four hours and twenty-five minutes the Wavell proposals and the personnel for the Executive Council and other big things that concern the nation." Pt. Nehru struck another optimistic note when he said "The whole thing is going well."

## THE LEAGUE POSER

Next day Simla witnessed two believe-it-or-not sights. On the one hand the Congress Working Committee optimistic of the outcome, was straining every nerve to hammer out the panel of names for the Viceroy's approval; on the other hand the League Working Committee listened to the Qaid-e-Azam's achievements at the Conference. The Muslim League Working Committee after full discussions decided to seek further clarification from the Viceroy. The points raised were:

1. What is the number of seats for Muslims in the Executive Council.
2. The League would not submit a panel but just the number of names that are required to fill the Muslim seats.
3. Names given must be accepted by the Viceroy, except that of an individual who, the Viceroy must convince Mr. Jinnah, is not suitable to the post.

Pending the decision on these points the League declined to submit the names.

## CONGRESS PANEL

The Congress was in a mood reminiscent of the days of 1937. The Nation's chosen chose for the nation. A panel of names marked for ability and representative character was submitted. There were several conjectures about the names included. Pt. Shukla, ex-Prime Minister of C. P. stated at Lucknow that the list included the names, of Maulana Azad, Pt. Nehru, Sardar Patel and Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukerjee. According to Free Press Correspondent, the final list was as follows:

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad,  
Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru,  
Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel,  
Dr. Rajendra Prasad,  
Mr. M. A. Jinnah,  
Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan,  
Nawab Mohammad Ismail Khan,  
Master Tara Singh,  
Sir Ardeshir Dalal,  
Sir Chintaman Deshmukh,  
Rajkumari Amrit Kaur,  
Mr. Munuswamy Pillai,  
Mr. B. Mondal.

## ANALYSIS

The Congress list divided as follows:—

HINDUS: (Congress) 3; (Non-Congress) 2	5
MUSLIMS: (Congress) 3; (Nationalists) 2,	5
SCHEDULED CASTES	2
INDIAN CHRISTIANS	2
PARSI	1
SIKH	1
Total	16

The Congress list of names shows that there were five Congressmen (three Hindus and two Muslims), three Muslim Leaguers, one Hindu Mahasabhaite, one non-Congress Hindu, two Scheduled Caste Hindus, one Parsi, one Indian Christian (woman) and one Sikh. The list included



top-men in the Congress, in the Muslim League and in the Hindu Mahasabha."

The Congress had played its part—will the Viceroy play his? All eyes were now turned to the Viceregal Lodge for the next move.

## LEAGUE OBSTRUCTS

League Working Committee met on the 9th July and after a short session drafted a reply to the Viceroy in which it refused to submit the panel of names because the assurances which it had demanded of the Viceroy were not forthcoming.

Next day the League Executive met to consider the letter received from the Viceroy on the previous night and decided that its delegates attend the Conference on the 14th July. A wave of optimism again spread through Simla.

On the 11th Mr. Jinnah was granted an interview by the Viceroy, who showed Jinnah his list of Muslim names. Mr. Jinnah, however, expressed his inability to accept the Viceroy's selection.

Mahatma Gandhi interviewed the Viceroy the same evening and Azad had discussions with Gandhiji on his return from the Viceregal Lodge. The Congress President informed the waiting pressmen that the goal was still far off. The position as it existed on the night of that momentous day of surprises and tension was considered fluid. A number of observers thought that the Conference had failed while there were still some optimistic souls who thought that the Viceroy may yet avert the crisis by by-passing the League.

The Congress President met the Viceroy on 12th July, when Lord Wavell, it is understood, told the Congress President that Jinnah had rejected the Viceroy's offer of 4 seats for the Muslim League. He did not, however, indicate any possibility of going ahead with the formation of a new Government in the face of League's rejection of the offer.

## FAILURE A CERTAINTY

The failure of the Conference was now a certainty. Even rank optimists like Mr. C. Rajagopalachari who had been advocating compromise with the League at the cost of antagonising the Congress were extremely critical of the stand taken up by Jinnah. Rajaji stated:—

"There are two important issues raised by Mr. Jinnah. One is the Pakistan issue and the other the Muslim League's claim exclusively to represent all the Muslims in India. Both these issues are definitely to be left undecided and unprejudiced in making an interim settlement and forming an Executive Council to function until the war is over.

"The Pakistan issue will be taken up for decision when the new constitution is considered. The League's claim to represent all Muslims can only be decided in favour of the League when and if it substantiates its claim at the coming elections. One can understand the League's demand for acceptance before the elections, of its claim to be the sole representative of Muslims if its present strength in the Legislatures warranted such a claim.

"As it stands, the claim is backed only by suppositions. It is, therefore, not surprising that the British plan proceeds on the basis of parity on the two undecided issues.

"The Leaguers cannot claim completely to exclude non-League Muslims on any reasonable ground.

No Room for fears—"The Wavell Plan is clear as regards the restoration of popular Governments in the Provinces. There is no compulsion; but it is recommended that Provincial Ministries should have representatives of minority groups in the Legislatures instead of being one-party governments. The Congress is not likely to raise any objection to this principle for the interim period when the matter comes up for consideration, if the League shows a spirit of accommodation in the disposal of the question of the Centre.

"It is now no secret that the Congress has asked its best men to take up the responsibility of working the Wavell Plan. There is no room left for any suspicion or mental reservations. There is no section in the Conference now that desires to keep away from the Plan, barring the Muslim League who have yet to decide their course.

"If the League intransigence should once again prove to be a block it would be hard for it to justify its attitude before the world. The British Government have initiated the present conference with the express determination of not being baffled by a mere want of agreement on reasonable proposals.

"It is open to Mr. Jinnah now to play a great part, positive and constructive, in the interests of India as a whole, without losing or prejudicing the slightest item in his budget of claims. There can be no better opportunity and no better atmosphere than are available at present for a really satisfactory all-round interim settlement."

The Viceroy, however, had made up his mind not to give up the Anglo-Muslim front against the Congress. The usual British strategy of defeating India with her own weapons was once again supremely successful.

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## CHAPTER VIII

### THE END

On 14th July the adjourned Conference met to be dismissed as a pack of incorrigible boys who will fight with each other.

#### LORD WAVELL'S SPEECH

The Viceroy said:

"The main idea underlying the Conference was mine. If it had succeeded, its success would have been attributed to me and I cannot place the blame for its failure upon any of the parties."

"I must give the Conference an account of what has happened since we adjourned on 29th June. As you know, my original intention was the Conference should agree upon the strength and composition of the Executive Council and that thereafter parties should send me lists of names.

"Unfortunately, the Conference was unable to agree about the strength and composition of the Executive Council, and on the 29th June, I understood, with the approval of the Conference, to endeavour to produce a solution not based on any formula agreed in ad-

vance. I asked the parties to let me have lists of names, and said I would do what I could to produce a solution acceptable to the leaders and to the Conference.

**The Viceroy's Solution**—"I received lists from all parties represented here except from the European Group, who decided not to send a list and the Muslim League. I was, however, determined that the Conference should not fail until I had made every possible effort to bring it to a successful ending. I, therefore, made my provisional selections including certain Muslim League names, and I have every reason to believe that if these selections had been acceptable here they would have been acceptable to His Majesty's Government.

Jinnah vetoed it—"My selections would, I think, have given a balanced and efficient Executive Council whose composition would have been reasonably fair to all parties.

"I did not find it possible, however, to accept the claims of any party in full. When I explained my solution to Mr. Jinnah he told me that it was not acceptable to the Muslim League and he was so decided that I felt it would be useless to continue the discussion. In the circumstances I did not show my selection as a whole to Mr. Jinnah, and there was no object in showing them to the other leaders. The Conference has therefore failed."

## **PUNJAB PREMIER CONDEMNS JINNAH**

Malik Khizr Hyat Khan Tiwana, Premier of the Punjab, is reported to have said in the Conference that the failure of the Conference was not due to the Viceroy. The Viceroy asked for agreement among major parties and such agreement was not forthcoming. The Viceroy had clearly stated that issues of the future, like Pakistan were not to be prejudiced by the proposed arrangement. This declaration had been accepted by Mr. Jinnah.

As regards Mr. Jinnah's claim that the League alone could nominate Muslim members, the Punjab Premier contended that no one single party should be allowed to exclude other schools of thought. It would amount to giving the Muslim League the sole right of nomination and disenfranchising of other sections of Muslims.

## HARIJANS WANT PROPORTIONATE SEATS

Rao Bahadur Shivraj, President of the Scheduled Castes Federation, said that expediency had its place in politics but it held good only in so far as it was in consonance with justice and fairplay. Lord Wavell's approach to the problem was entirely wrong. He had asked only two parties (Congress and Muslim League) to settle things between themselves. If Muslims were a major party because their population was eighty millions he would point out that the Scheduled Castes numbered sixty million. Therefore, the Scheduled Castes' representation should be in proportion to their number. Mr. Jinnah's claim had come as a bomb-shell to the Scheduled Castes. If the Muslims got equality with the Hindus, the Scheduled Castes, between the Muslims and the Hindus, would be thrown to the wolves and would be kept out everywhere."—(A. P. J. Message).

The dismissal of the Conference was followed by a spate of statements and Press interviews which explained the stand taken up by the other parties and personalities.

## JINNAH'S DIAGNOSIS

The League Fuehrer explained his thesis on the 14th July as follows:—

"On a final examination and the analysis of the Wavell Plan, we found that it was a snare:

"There was the combination consisting of Gandhi-Hindu Congress, who stand for India's Hindu national independence as one India and the latest exponent of geographical unity, Lord Wavell, and Glancy-Khizr, who are bent upon creating disruption among the Muslims in the Punjab, and we were sought to be pushed into this arrangement, which, if we had agreed to, as proposed by Lord Wavell, we should have signed our death warrant.

"For, let us honestly examine the Wavell Plan. Our stand has been, and we have repeatedly made it clear to the British Government times out of number since '40 that we cannot consider or enter into any provisional interim government unless a declaration is made by the British Government guaranteeing the right of self-determination of Muslims and pledging that after the war, or so soon as it may be possible the British Government would establish Pakistan having

regard to the basic principles laid down in the Lahore resolution of the Muslim League, passed in March '40. This was condition precedent No. I to our considering any provisional arrangement.

Not a minority—"The second condition was that we are not a minority but a nation, and we can only enter into provisional arrangement having regard to the necessities and exigencies of the moment created by the war and fully co-operate in the prosecution of the war and that in any arrangement we claimed equal number in the proposed executive.

"The Wavell proposals set at nought both these conditions and called upon us to make the severest sacrifice. I know that he in his broadcast said that these proposals are without prejudice to any future constitution or constitutions of India. While in one breath it is impressed upon us that these proposals are without prejudice to and do not prejudge the Pakistan issue, yet the plan in fact contradicts this in the next breath by its very terms.

"It is obvious to any intelligent man that if we accept this arrangement the Pakistan issue will be shelved and put in cold storage indefinitely, whereas, the Congress will have secured under this arrangement what they want, a clear road for their advantage towards securing Hindu national independence of India. Because the future executive will work as a unitary Government of India we know that this interim or provisional arrangement will have a way of settling down for an unlimited period and all the forces in the proposed executive plus the known policy of the British Government, and Lord Wavell's strong inclination for a united India, would completely jeopardize us, for, I will quote Mr. Amery, who has tried his best but in the results given us cold comfort and his statement is a very clear indication and a pointer to British policy. Speaking in the House of Commons, where he presented the White paper, he said as follows:—

"The ideal to which we have always looked on is that of an all-India union in which the States would play their full part. At the same time we have also recognized the possibility that agreement between Hindus and Muslims on any form of an Indian unity may be unattainable. Any interim advance therefore must in no way prejudge the question whether the ultimate settlement is based on an united or divided India."

**Viceroy's veto**—"Next, in the proposed Executive we would be reduced to a minority of one-third, all the other minorities, such as the Scheduled Castes, Sikhs and Christians have the same goal as the Congress. They have their grievances as minorities, but their goal and ideology is and cannot be different from or otherwise than that of a united India. Ethnically and culturally they are very closely knitted to the Hindu Society. I am not against full justice being done to all the minorities and they should be fully safeguarded and protected as such, wherever they may be. But in the actual working and practice, invariably their vote will be against us and there is no safeguard for us except the Viceroy's veto, which it is well-known to any constitutionalist, cannot be exercised lightly as everyday business against majority decisions with regard to the policy and the principles that will have to be laid down and measures adopted, both administrative and legislative.

"On the top of this came the last straw on the camel's back that even about the five members of the Muslim bloc which were allotted to us communal wise, which is the essence of Wavell proposals we were told that the Muslim League was not entitled to nominate all the Muslim representatives as our chosen spokesmen and there were two claimants — the Congress, which claimed two, and Glancy-Khizr on behalf of the Punjab claimed one. This move on the part of these two went at the very root and the very existence of the Muslim League regarding its position, character and status. But finally we broke as Lord Wavell insisted upon his having one non-Leaguer nominee of Malik Khizr Hyat representing Punjab Muslims.

**Sole Representatives**—"As I have said it is only the blind who cannot see that the All-India Muslim League is the only authoritative representative organization of the Muslims. If we had accepted this position as presented to us by Lord Wavell we would have emerged out of this Conference minus everything and we would have betrayed our people. It would have been an abject surrender on our part for all we stand for and it would have been a death-knell to the Muslim League. This was the position which forced us and we found that it was impossible for us to accept this arrangement."

Nawabzada Liaquat Ali supported his leader and said that attempts were being made by their opponents to hold

the Muslim League responsible for the failure of the Simla Conference.

The responsibility for its failure, he said, was that of the Hindu Congress, Khizr Hyat Khan and Sir Betrand Glancy.

It would have been suicidal for the Mussalmans to accept the Wavell Plan, until the Muslim League had been given the exclusive right to choose Muslim nominees for the new Executive Council.

There was also no clarification as to how long the interim arrangement would continue. It was quite possible that any decision reached by the interim Government would have prejudiced their demand for Pakistan. The Muslim equality envisaged in the plan was on paper only.

It was a matter of shame, the Nawabzada said, that the Congress putting aside the "Quit India" resolution came to the feet of Lord Wavell.

The claim of the Congress that it was a national organisation was to throw dust in the eyes of the public. It was a Hindu organization pure and simple."

## THE CONGRESS POINT OF VIEW

The Congress President on the other hand explained the Congress stand as follows:

"With a faltering step and a wavering mind, we cannot reach our destination. It is good to think twice before taking a step forward. But when a step has already been taken, hesitation is not a virtue but a weakness. If the British Government wishes to give shape to things they should have realised the communal condition. They should have been prepared not to surrender the right of veto to any group and thus bloc the path of progress."

## PLAN SPRUNG AS SURPRISE

The Congress President explained the reasons for the Congress participation in the Conference.

"The proposals were presented to us suddenly. On June 15, I and my colleagues were released and we had to take a decision straightaway on the Plan. You can realise our difficulties. We were thrown into a new world and despite the difficulties



the Working Committee decided to participate in the Conference. We realised that vast changes had taken place in the international sphere and those changes had undoubtedly repercussions on the Indian problem. The inevitable result of those changes had been to bring to the forefront the question of Indian freedom and that of the freedom of Asiatic countries.

"We are very near our goal and the next stage is the goal itself. It does not matter at all what are the intentions of the British Government."

The Maulana continued, "While fully bearing in mind the fact that the present arrangement was purely temporary and interim, and should not possibly be regarded as a precedent for the permanent arrangement of the future, I should like to emphasise and make it perfectly clear that the Congress is a national organization, and it cannot possibly be a party to any arrangement, however interim and temporary it may be, that prejudices its national character, tends to impair the growth of nationalism or reduces it directly to a communal body."

During the course of his interviews with the Viceroy the Maulana emphasised the national character of the Congress organization and said that he attached considerable importance to the declaration that the provisional plan was intended as a preliminary step towards the achievement of the cherished goal of independence of India. He had also made it plain to His Excellency that the Congress Working Committee wished to co-operate in every reasonable way to help to resolve the present deadlock and the Congress had accordingly, in spite of adverse circumstances, come to Simla to participate in the Conference. But whatever decision the Working Committee might take, it would require to be confirmed and ratified by the All-India Congress Committee. The fact the A.I.C.C. and other Congress Committees were still under ban and a large number of Congressmen were in internment, detention or imprisonment was creating serious obstacles in their way.

### VITAL ISSUES CLEARED

The Congress President explained the various issues on which he had sought clarification from His Excellency and said:

"I can say that the replies received from the Viceroy were satisfactory."

The issues on which he sought further light were:

A. The scope and function of the proposed External Affairs Department.

B. Every possible effort should be made to give a national character to the Indian Army and to bring about cordiality between the national army, the National Government and the people. The present barriers isolating them will of course have to go.

C. After the present war in South East Asia, it must be clearly understood that the Indian Government cannot support any policy aimed at the continuation of imperialist control of any of the countries in S.E. Asia, nor can it allow the use of Indian resources for the deprivation of freedom of any of these countries.

D. In regard to the Indian States while recognising that during the interim period, the powers of the Crown representative will continue, it is clear that the National Government will have to deal with many matters which overlap and have concern with the States in regard to trade, industry, Labour etc.

The barriers between the States peoples, the Princes and members of the National Government and their associates should be removed so as to help in mutual discussions, consultations and consideration of common problems and their solution.

## TERMS FOR FIGHTING JAPAN

Amplifying his observation on the South East Asia countries the Congress President said that so far as the present situation was concerned, if the new arrangement had been successfully reached the war against Japan would have become not Britain's war against Japan, but India's war against Japan. There could not be two opinions as regards the question of liberating countries in South East Asia. It would be the duty of the new Government of India to carry out the war against Japan ceaselessly till those countries were liberated, but if it was

the desire and intention of the powers that those countries should be restored to 'status quo' then surely the new Indian Government would not be a party to it. They would not permit a single Indian soldier or the expenditure of a single pie for the 'status quo' of the South East Asia countries.

## **NO COMMUNAL REPRESENTATION**

On the question of caste Hindu-Muslim parity which formed the basis of the new proposals the Maulana said that he had impressed on the Viceroy that in the constitution of the new Government the criterion should be the political views held by parties and not religious belief. The Congress did not wish to attach undue importance to the fact of a few more Muslims being in the Government or there being a few less Hindus. "I raised all these issues at the Conference itself and I must say the replies His Excellency gave were to my mind reassuring."

## **JINNAH WAS UNCOMPROMISING**

After the settlement of those fundamental issues the Conference came to consider the strength and composition of the new Executive Council. The Conference was adjourned to enable private and informal talks to be carried on amongst the parties for a settlement.

"You know the conversation led to no results," the Maulana Saheb said. He added: "In the course of those informal talks the position taken up by Mr. Jinnah was that the Muslim League on behalf of the Muslims should nominate Muslim Members in the new Executive Council. The Congress found that such a position would be inconsistent with its basic national character.

"You must remember that as far as we are concerned it is not merely a question of seats, but one affecting the fundamental principle. We were prepared to accommodate the Muslim League, but Mr. Jinnah took up an uncompromising attitude."

## **WAVELL FAILED TO PLACATE JINNAH**

Continuing, the Congress President said that the Viceroy asked the various groups to submit lists of names from

which His Excellency would choose after consultation with Party leaders. Mr. Jinnah refused to submit names.

"In the interview I had with His Excellency on July 12, he told me that so far as the Muslim seats were concerned, he had endeavoured to prepare a list and seek Mr. Jinnah's approval.

"The Viceroy further told me that he did his best, but failed to persuade Mr. Jinnah who insisted that the Muslim nominees should be nominated by the League Working Committee. The Viceroy was unable to agree to it and felt it was not profitable to proceed with the proposals at present."

**British responsibility for failure.**—"Two points arise out of the present" the Congress President said. "The first is that the attitude of the Muslim League has been responsible for the failure of the Conference. The second point which emerges from the refusal of the Muslim League is that it is for Lord Wavell to decide whether to go forward or not. His Excellency has decided not to proceed for the present. In this connection I must say what I said at the Conference. The British Government could not absolve themselves of the responsibility for the communal problem here. So long as the third party remains in India these difficulties will remain as pawns on a chess-board and will continue to move in this fashion. Whether it is to-day or tomorrow they must take up a firm stand on a just and fair basis. There is no other alternative but to do that. And once a decision is taken, we must move forward. Those who are prepared to go forward must be allowed to go forward and those who wish to be kept out should be left out. Without determination nothing could be done. Wavering minds and faltering steps will never carry us forward in the path of progress. We must think before we take a step. And once we decide, hesitation is no virtue but a sign of definite weakness. There is nothing new in this so-called communal problem.

"I have no regrets whatsoever for the Congress stand in this Conference," the Maulana emphasised.

Besides what he had told there were certain details about the proceedings of the Conference and there was certain correspondence which he had exchanged with the Viceroy. He was not at liberty just now to reveal them, but the country must know all about it to have a correct picture of the situation. He had written to His Excellency for

their release and he hoped that these might be published shortly.

In reply to another question, the Congress President contested the claim that the League was the sole representative and authoritative organization of the Muslims of India. In the provinces where Muslims were in a majority, there was no League Ministry. There was a Congress Ministry in the Frontier Province. In the Punjab it was a Unionist Ministry. In Sind Sir Ghulam Hussein depended on Congress support and the same position was in Assam. It could not, therefore, be claimed that the Muslim League represented all the Muslims. There was a large bloc of Muslims, who had nothing to do with the League.

### FURTHER CONCESSIONS

Later, on July 24, interviewed by the Associated Press of India, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad further outlined the proposal he had made at Simla to overcome the opposition of the Muslim League.

"Asked whether there was any truth in the report that, at the time of the Simla negotiations, he made an offer to the League that he would not press for the inclusion of Congress Muslims in the seats reserved for Muslims in the proposed reconstituted Executive Council, the Congress President said that that was true. His proposal was that, if the League agreed to the inclusion of two able and suitable Nationalist Muslims, who belonged neither to the Congress nor to the League, he would not insist upon the inclusion of any Congress Muslims.

"The Congress President added that he had made this offer on his own responsibility and before he had a chance to consult his colleagues of the Working Committee. But he had felt confident that if the League had proved agreeable, he would have been able to persuade the Congress Working Committee to accept the suggestion."

### PANDIT NEHRU'S STATEMENT

Pandit Nehru was equally bitter in his denunciation of the League attitude. He said:—

"Politics considered in terms of religious communities is wholly inconsistent with both democracy and any

modern conception of politics or economics. There lies the real rub. To give in to this medieval conception is to throw back the whole course of development in India, political and economic, and try to build a structure which does not fit in with the realities of to-day in any department of life. You can never ignore realities for long and if you try to do so, you do so at your peril.

"That is the essence of the communal problem, so far as I am concerned, and not a question of service or jobs or anything else, and India will have to decide not today but tomorrow or the day after, whether it is going to be a democratic modern country or an undemocratic medieval country. The latter choice is really ruled out because it just cannot be done by any country today.

"The normal choice for countries today is not between mediaevalism and democracy but what might be called just political democracy or something more, that is, economic democracy also, which means socialism in some form or other.

"At the back of all these superficial conflicts which are sometimes represented by individuals are of course impersonal forces at work. Lord Wavell for instance, occupied a leading position as Viceroy and no doubt his personality counts. Gandhiji or the Congress President also occupies leading positions and what they may say or do counts. So also Mr. Jinnah. But behind all these individuals are those impersonal forces which both control and push on those individuals. Lord Wavell ultimately must function within the limits of British policy. Congressmen must function within the limits of Indian nationalism and Indian independence. What Mr. Jinnah's urges and limitations are I am not competent to say. So, it is not a question really of individual bona fides in the matter but the conflict of impersonal forces—primarily the British power in India and Indian Nationalism and secondarily, certain mediaeval urges in India plus various fear complexes and modern progressive tendencies."

## FUNDAMENTAL CONFLICT

"A Canadian correspondent asked if Pandit Nehru's point was that basic British policy in India was to hang on to power in India at any cost, and that if there was a conflict British policy must be in opposition to Indian nationalism.

Pandit Nehru replied there was a fundamental conflict between British imperialism and Indian nationalism—but circumstances and many new factors changed that policy.

"I do think that the world situation as it is today and as it will be tomorrow are exercising a powerful pressure on British policy to come to some terms with the Indian people. These terms they would like to be as favourable as possible to British interests in India. This is natural but I think they must realize that old order in India cannot possibly continue, even though Mr. Churchill would like it to continue."

"I do not mean" Pandit Nehru went on in reply to a further question, "the average member of the Muslim League is mediaeval. I think there are many progressive people in Muslim League, who, once the lid of mediaevalism is removed, would become political radicals."

"It happened in the circumstances of today that certain questions have been made to cover up and obscure all the really important political and economic issues in the country. That happens sometimes."

"What are the important issues after all? The first issue in India is the agrarian problem. Allied to it is the industrial problem. They are locked and interlocked into each other. These are fundamental questions which apply to the Hindu and Muslim alike. The misfortune is they got covered up by these complexes, and prejudices, which, however superficial they may be, become formidable obstacles at the moment."

"The so-called communal problem in India has no deep roots. By that I do not deny its importance at the present stage. It is very important but it has nevertheless no deep roots and, therefore, I do not think that a solution of it will take a long time once it gets going, because immediately the mediaeval lid is removed, the real problems of the day come up, and they have no application to Hindu or Muslim as such."

## SEPARATE ELECTORATE

Pandit Nehru referred to the attitude of the people in the Middle East countries and said although these people had sympathy on religious grounds with their co-religionists in India or elsewhere, there was no appreciation or understanding of this conversion of politics into a chequer board of religious communities. He also invited foreign correspondents, in particular, to suppose what would happen if

America, for instance, was divided into electoral constituencies for Catholics, Methodists, Jews and various other Christian and other sects. You cannot imagine any democratic system being based on such a thing. Yet, that is what is happening in India today. Inevitably you procure conditions in which each community with its separate electorates thinks in terms of its special group interests. If you have separate electorates in any country under the sun I guarantee you will have problems worse than the communal problems in India.

Replying to the Muslim League claim that the Muslims were a separate nation Pandit Nehru said: "I will admit that circumstances may produce not a separate nation but a group which is so anti-national that it may be considered a separate nation. Such a thing may develop. But the real thing is, today it is beside the point to talk about nations as such. The modern tendency is for the idea of a nation not to be confused with the idea of a State. The biggest countries today are multi-nationalist.

"If it pleases Mr. Jinnah to consider himself as belonging to a separate nation, there the matter ends. He can call himself that. But it does not solve any problem. Even supposing there are two, three or five nations in India, the problem is how are they to get along together?"

Fantastic—"You cannot disarm fears," Pandit Nehru said. "Fear is a complex for which you require psycho-analytical treatment. It is an odd thing that it has been said, by some prominent members of the Muslim League though not by Mr. Jinnah himself, that the Muslims are far stronger and more powerful and if British rule was not there, they could dominate others. On the other hand, they talked of fear of being dominated by the majority. It is absurd to talk of anyone dominating eighty or ninety millions of people. The whole idea is fantastic. My plane of thinking is entirely different from Mr. Jinnah's. It may be lower but it is different."

"What is the way out," was the next question asked.

"There may be many ways out," Pandit Nehru replied. "Obviously one way out which for the moment is not available is for the third party to retire from the scene either actually or theoretically. I mean there should be no question of the third party imposing its will, and other parties should realize they have to face



the issues themselves without that third party. Then they will face realities. Or, in the alternative—obviously, a very desirable alternative—other parties should pull together.

"The other possible courses really depend on the growth of almost overwhelming strength on the part of one or more groups which pull together so that their influence might be felt by all the remaining parties concerned.

"Lastly, there might well be, owing to the deterioration of the economic situation, a complete collapse leading partly to chaos and partly to revolt and revolution in various parts of the country. India is fairly on the verge of it, considering the economic situation, in spite of much money having been made at the top."

**Sikh Viewpoint.**—Master Tara Singh dubbed the failure of the Conference as gigantic and attributed it to a small issue. In a press conference at Simla on 15th July, he said:—"I was not surprised at the failure of the Conference in view of the attitude which some of the delegates adopted from the very start of the Conference. But a wave of frustration and despair may spread throughout the country on account of this colossal failure of the leaders at this critical juncture, as the country expected a good deal to come out of this Conference. The opportunity which is lost will not return and nobody can predict what may be the repercussions of this failure of big men on a small issue.

**The Bone of Contention.**—"The situation boiled down to this. The League insisted upon the recognition of its right to nominate all the Muslim members of the Executive Council, as the sole representative body of the Muslims. But the Congress refused to admit this position and insisted upon its own national character and consequently upon its right of nominating at least one of the Muslim members of the Executive Council. So the dispute was for one seat only which resulted in this gigantic failure. Both sides considered it to be a point of principle. So there appears to be no way out.

"It appears that the deadlock will continue for years unless the parties modify their claims. What a pity!

**Arbitration Proposals.**—"I suggested at the last moment that the dispute may be referred to arbitration and I repeat it now. After all, it is an interim arrangement. Each party may stick to its principle; but may agree, without prejudice to its claim and rights, to abide by the award of an arbitrator for the interim period. By this strategem we can by-pass, for the time being

this difference which has been made a matter of principle. Why should this small matter stand in the way of our getting power from the hands of the English? One seat in the Executive Council is not a big issue over which the far more important issue of wresting power from the English should founder. I appeal to the big leaders not to become small and make themselves liable to the odium of our future generations.

People's Veto.—“I refrain from apportioning blames, for it can serve no useful purpose. The Viceroy's statement throws enough light over the situation. But if the leaders stick to their position as rigidly as they are doing now, the coming settlement must be taken out of their hands and those of the Viceroy as well. The people are the final judges of the opposing claims. If the leaders fail to arrive at a settlement, the issue, in due course will be decided in the democratic way by the electorate.

“The Viceroy in his broadcast and the Secretary of State in his statement made it abundantly clear that there would be no change in the present administrative machinery without the main elements in the country coming together. The Wavell Proposal was a fair solution of our present difficulties and if all parties had joined to work it, it would have proved a stepping stone to our final goal of Independence.”

“Pakistan is not an issue between the Congress and the Muslim League as it has hitherto been wrongly considered to be. It is mainly a Sikh-Muslim question, because the Sikhs are mainly affected by it. So, the Muslims must recognise that just as they cannot submit to Hindu domination, the Sikhs cannot submit to Muslim domination for the same, if not better, reasons. The Sikhs are groaning even under the present Muslim domination in the Punjab and they have to make efforts to get rid of it as soon as an opportunity offers itself at the end of the war.”

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## CHAPTER IX

### *THE EPILOGUE*

The Simla Conference is over, but the people still argue why it failed. In public speeches and newspapers, we still hear arguments blaming one party or the other. Demands are made for correspondence to be published. We must

therefore take stock and evaluate the forces behind the Conference.

## THE ANALYSIS

The question that is uppermost in many minds is why was the Congress drawn into the Simla Conference.

We must remember that the Congress Working Committee coming out after three years of imprisonment was left no time to sense the real feelings of the people. An oppressive atmosphere of defeatism had been meanwhile created in the country by a constant search for a "Way Out" from the Deadlock. Attempts after attempts were made to settle the political issue between the British Government and the Indian people. But the British Government remained unmoved. Each attempt was a watering down of our just demands. There was intense suffering and hunger in the country. The people anxiously wanted a change of Government which could bring them some relief. Attempts at political settlement were followed by attempts to settle the communal issue. It was believed that if the League and the Congress could join hands, the British Government will have to concede the popular demands. The nationalist Muslims felt weak and unable to control the communal influence of the League. They constantly harped upon the need of settling with the League. The people were confused by the atmosphere of surrender. They could make no demands on the Congress for a bold and definite stand. One concession after another had been made, till Gandhiji, inspired by Rajaji, agreed to concede what amounted to Pakistan. And yet the League leader remained adamant. There seemed to be no way out.

In the midst of this atmosphere came the news of the Desai-Liaquat Pact. It was reported that the pact had the approval of Gandhiji. This settled all opposition to the surrender.

The Working Committee came out on 15th June and was asked to decide immediately on the Simla Conference. How were they to judge the real feelings of the people? They only saw the urgent demand of the people for some change

or some relief. The defeatism and the atmosphere of surrender created by men outside the Jail left them no alternative. And so the Working Committee had to agree to the Simla Conference in the hope that it may provide a "Window" to independence and to solve the immediate and pressing problem of the day.

The Working Committee decision must have been also influenced by the fact that for the first time an attempt was made by the British Government to call a Conference of representatives of elected political parties. Except for Sardar Tara Singh and Mr. Shiv Raj, the rest of the invitees represented elected political parties in the legislature. The convening of a Conference also gave the impression that the decision of the Conference will be accepted by the Viceroy.

Lord Wavell, however, had a different view of the Conference. During the first week, the Conference functioned as a reference where decisions were taken. But once the Conference adjourned leaving the Viceroy to bring about a solution "acceptable to the leaders and the Conference," he decided that it was he that mattered and not the Conference. He, therefore, dismissed the Conference without even consulting it or taking its opinion as to the possibility of going on with the proposals without the League.

The British Government have always stated that they are unable to transfer power to the people of India because the major communities do not agree among themselves. Such an argument cannot be now put forward. Lord Wavell in making his selection of Muslim names is reported to have selected 4 Muslim League members and one representative of the Unionists of Punjab. The Viceroy had ignored the Congress claims. The implication of such a list is clear. The Muslim League is only one of the Muslim Parties and not the only Muslim Party even according to the Viceroy. The rest of the Political parties including the other Muslim Party were prepared to go on with the Conference and the Wavell Plan. But their willingness was of no consequence.

The list prepared by the Viceroy was also cleverly chosen. It seems that even if the League leader had accepted the list, the Congress would have been compelled to reject it. How can Congress permit itself to be treated as representing only Hindus?

It is obvious, therefore, that the Conference procedure was a mere blind and Lord Wavell had set out for a plan which would either be rejected by the League or the Congress. We must, therefore, ask ourselves the question, will Britain willingly part with power? It is believed that the world forces may compel a change in the British policy.

What are these world forces? If the International Conferences and the meetings of the Big Three are any guide it is obvious that the powers are interested in dividing the world between themselves. There is a struggle between the Anglo-Americans on one side and the Soviet Russia on the other for strategic bases and spheres of influence. The American and British Governments have divided China and India between them. What is left is mere empty declarations of four freedoms and democracy. In such a picture the freedom of India and other Colonies has no place.

The British Elections are also believed to have been at the back of these proposals. There are hardly any reasons for such a belief. The Wavell proposals had the backing of all parties in England. India was not one of the issues at the Election; and if India featured at all, it was only in the Sparkbrook Constituency in which Mr. Amery was contesting against a Labour and a Communist candidate.

Why then these proposals? Lord Wavell and the British Government, in our opinion, had to take some steps to confuse the soldier returning from far flung battle-fronts. Similar attempts had been made at the end of the last War. The soldier, who had fought and given his life was not likely to accept the situation where his future interests were ignored. He had shed his blood in a belief to gain security and freedom. The burden of denying it must therefore be shifted from shoulders of the British Govern-

ment to the shoulders of his own leaders. He must feel confused and helpless. Then alone there can be some hope of returning the Status Quo.

Lately, the overwhelming success of the Labour Party and its return to power has given rise to many hopes. The Labour Party has often repeated its sympathy towards our aspirations. Will they not now make an effort and line up to their often repeated word? We must not, however, forget that the Labour Party is as Imperialistic in its outlook as the Conservatives. The Wavell proposals were approved by all the British parties. Even in the King's speech to the Parliament, the other day, the old catch phrase "that in accordance with the promises already made my Government will do their utmost to promote full self-government" was repeated. There is not a word in this declaration recognising India's independence. Why then this faith? Our freedom has to be won by our own efforts and no outside power can secure it for us. The Progressive forces of the world are mere ripples on the gigantic struggle for power that is raging in the World. It is this desire to dominate that we have to contend with.

### LOOKING AHEAD

The Simla Conference had met when the war was still going on. Indian politics were in the picturesque phrase of C. Rajagopalachari, still in "the embrace of Military exigencies." There was perhaps some reason for demanding unanimity of agreement and upholding the Viceroy's veto in the abnormal circumstances of the war. With the end of hostilities such demands have as much relevance in India as in any other country of the world. Many countries in Europe and Asia are struggling to rehabilitate themselves, and nowhere the demand of unanimous agreement has been made as a condition precedent to the assertion of sovereignty. No country is free from thorny and prickly problems, but they are treated everywhere as "internal" problems wherein outside powers have no "locus standi."

Now that the war is over, the acceptance of Indian independence is the "sine qua non" of any progress. During the

war years, attention was focussed on interim arrangements. The Cripps proposals were rejected because of the inadequacy of their interim arrangements. No serious analysis was offered of the permanent solution adumbrated therein. The situation today is different. India cannot be satisfied with any halfway house; her demand for independence is imperative. The essence of independence is that the people of India are left to solve their internal problems, and that solution is possible when Indians are left in unfettered control of their country. With the end of the war "Quit India" gains in point and thrust. Judged by this touchstone, the Cripps proposals appear to lack sincerity. They contain the promise of "the earliest possible realisation of self-Government in India." "Immediately upon the cessation of hostilities," we are assured, "steps shall be taken to set up in India an elected body charged with the task of framing a new constitution for India." The objectives are laudable, but the procedure is full of snags. The Constitution-making body is to consist of about one-tenth of the entire membership of the Provincial Legislature elected by the system of proportional representation "plus" a third of that number "nominated" by the Princes in case the States decide to join the Constitution-making body. Such a body, with its probable membership of 215, is sure to have a reactionary majority. The Constituent Assembly under the Cripps plan, if the States come in, will in reality be a body that will make the British rule safe in India! No real Constituent Assembly is possible until the rulers of the States are stripped of their autocratic powers, and democratically elected representatives are chosen by the people of the States. Among the Founding Fathers you may mix democrats and autocrats only at your peril.

States and Provinces, after having participated in the Constitution-making body, after having shaped the new Constitution to their special purposes and needs, are free not to accede to the new State. They are invited to make the bed, but there is no obligation to lie in it!

Even this monstrous constitution framed in a hybrid Assembly has not the authority to usher the new State in.

the world. Its emergence is subject to a Treaty which shall be negotiated between the British Government and the Constitution-making body. "This Treaty will make provision, in accordance with the undertakings given by His Majesty's Government for the protection of racial and religious minorities." The undertakings include the undertaking of Linlithgow to Jinnah, alleged to have been made in the declaration of August 1940—an undertaking that enables the Qaid-e-Azam to exercise a veto over the political progress of India. Thanks to this mechanism of the Treaty, the Constitution-making body will, in the final analysis, be reduced to a glorified version of the Simla Conference—Qaid-e-Azam "uber alles"!

The Cripps plan thus opens no more "a window to independence" than the Wavell proposals. It keeps us enmeshed in the Churchill-Amery logic of seeking Indian freedom through an agreement of all "the parties, communities and interests" in the country—a patently impossible adventure.

The sincerity of the British—of the Labour Government—will be judged by their preparedness to abandon the untenable demand of agreement among all "the parties, communities and interests" as a precondition of transfer of full powers to India. Such an agreement spells appeasement of those very interests whose erosion is necessary for the emergence of free India. Many of the interests have been the creation of British rule—specifically brought into existence to consolidate the British hold on India. Take the Princes. Every competent historian of the Indian States—Tupper, Lee Warner, Edward Thompson—has characterised the States, as they exist today, as the creation of the British Government. The strength of the Princes—in the prevailing climate of democracy—is derived from the British bayonets in India. The autocratic "facade" will collapse the moment the British support is withdrawn. To appease the Princes—to receive their nominees in the Constitution-making body—is to accept British Controlled "enclaves" in an India struggling to be free. The Princes must survive only on the goodwill of their subjects and their fellow citizens in this great country of ours. There can be no question



of seeking an agreement with the Princes in any Constitution that is to be devised for free India.

The Muslim League must be helped to get out of the curious position it has taken up. It cannot simultaneously claim to represent a community sprawled over the whole of India and also seek to carve out an independent state. In a United India far-reaching concessions will be made to the great Muslim Community—the same can never be made to the splintered Muslim minority that will remain in Hindustan after the partition has been carried out. So long as Mr. Jinnah is a citizen of Bombay he cannot evince any loyalty to the Pakistan State. After the partition, Mr. Jinnah must either migrate to Pakistan or become a loyal Citizen of Hindustan or be prepared to be treated as an alien in Hindustan. He cannot run with the hare and hunt with the hound.

The Provisional Indian Government will always be ready to seek a referendum in predominantly Muslim areas on the issue of United "versus" partitioned India. The decision of the majority, with suitable boundary adjustments in case the vote goes in favour of partition, would be implemented by one or two constitution-making bodies that would be set up in the wake of the plebiscite. It must, however, be a plebiscite of all the adults in the area—and can never be confined to one community. This vote must be accepted by the League as the 'final word on the subject. Subject to this referendum the Muslim League cannot be allowed to veto the political progress of India. In the war years, its appetite has been greatly whetted. From being an inevitable adjunct of communal electorates (1936), the League advanced the claim of equality with the Congress (1940) and has ended by seeking not only to be equal to the rest of India but also to exercise a veto on any and every act of the "National" Government. The policy of appeasing the League must lead to the disintegration of Indian Nationalism and frustration in our quest for freedom. If the League is anxious to establish a separate state—which, after all, must have a territorial basis—it must cease to speak for a community. If it wants to represent a community it must

abandon its schemes and dreams of partitioning India. It cannot ask for separation and also hope to retain the safeguards. The Muslim League's dual role promises only Dragon's harvest for this long suffering land.

It is only when the British support is withdrawn that the League can be compelled to choose the one or the other position.

The acid test is: will the British withdraw and leave the Indians to settle for themselves? To demand a settlement before leaving is, in fact, a decision against withdrawal from India.

Facts do not warrant optimism. The fresh proposals that Lord Wavell will bring from the Whitehall will not materially advance the country towards its cherished goal. The only safe course for the Nationalist India is to fall back on its own strength. The elections to the Provincial and the Central Legislatures have been announced. It is a curious anomaly to hold elections in 1945, on the eve of the birth of Independent India, on the basis of 1919 and 1935 Acts—Acts that the expressed will of the people has consigned to the dustbin of history. The Congress participation in the elections must not be merely for winning seats or even obtaining majority. At the end of the elections, we envisage no lifeless Convention as in 1937. We must forge out of the elections a Constituent Authority strong enough to assert Indian people's will against the British rulers and their satellites in the country. "It will be remembered that the electors of Paris," says a historian of the French Revolution, "instead of dispersing after the election, had continued their organization." They built up a militia of their own called the National Guards. Vast social changes never occur peacefully. Powerful sanctions have to be forged to achieve major turnovers in history. Electoral triumph will be barren unless out of the elections a powerful Authority built on the organised might of the people is created. "Quit India" must be followed not by a tame acceptance of British-made "constitution-making body"—which will be merely a repetition of the innumer-

able Round Table Conferences we have had in the past—but by the forging of a Constituent Authority.

If this perspective is accepted the work for every Nationalist—whatever his community or class is clearly mapped out before him. Rallying of all Nationalist elements among the Muslims against the League is an important step in the creation of the Constituent Authority. The final abandonment of the policy of appeasement of the Muslim League will automatically rally the Muslim Nationalists on the Congress side. The reorganisation of the Congress will then be aimed towards creating greater mass strength behind the Congress and a necessary part of the work will be the ruthless liquidation of the lingering influence enjoyed by disruptionist and anti-national groups like the Communists and the Royists among the labouring classes.

Let the Congress focus the country's attention not on what Lord Wavell is going to bring in his mental bag, but on the coming elections which have to be fought on the slogan of "Quit India" that has to be implemented by the forging of an invincible mass organisation that can function as the Constituent Authority. If the British do not voluntarily abdicate we must prepare for their compulsory liquidation.

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## CHAPTER X

### CONFERENCE SIDELIGHTS

**Conference Sidelights.**—Without Comment and without apologies. It is easy to be wise after the event—even then so what? Victims—Mainly Politicians, Special Correspondents & Newspaper Headlines:

1. Ootacamund, June 22.—Mr. V. Pillay, M.L.A., a Scheduled Caste leader in a statement welcoming the British Government's proposals says, "I feel the retention of the Viceroy's veto is necessary."

2. Simla, June 24.—Hindu Sabha volunteers who staged hostile demonstrations against Gandhiji on his arrival this

morning threw a few black flags into Mahatma's car and shouted slogans, "Boycott Wavell Proposals, do not sell Hindu rights and Savarkarji."

3. Qadian, June 23.—"The Wavell offer is a divine offer to India and it would be most unfortunate for her to reject it," declared Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-din Mahmud Ahmad, head of the Ahmedia community.

4. Bombay, June 23.—"Mr. Bhulabhai Desai said that the Wavell Plan was better than the Desai-Liaquat Formula, for ending the political deadlock."

5. Simla, June 23.—"This beautiful 7,000 feet high Himalayan hill station, where many chapters in India's legislative history have been written, will tomorrow become the venue of a conference, on the result of which will depend the future of India's millions for many decades."—A 'special correspondent.'

6. Simla, June 24.—"A friend of mine convinced me that a change had come over the official atmosphere and even European Officials have started saying Gandhiji".—"A Special Correspondent."

7. Simla, June 25.—"Somebody irreverently described the gathering of invitees as a parade of acceptors with the Maharaja of Parlakimedi as a fluke."

"Mr. Bhulabhai must be the most happy man as he watched his work going another step ahead."—"A Special Correspondent."

8. Bombay, June 26.—The Bombay Parsi Association sent a telegram to the Viceroy reminding him "of the assurances given by the Secretary of State for India that the rights and privileges of those who have helped the war effort will not be ignored."

9. Simla, June 26.—"I had no idea to kill Rajaji, I only wanted to punish him—Mr. L. G. Thatte, after his attempted assault on Madras ex-Premier. The weapon was a three feet long lathi."

10. Simla, June 27.—"If you really desire to improve and save our country morally and physically, please introduce

total prohibition throughout India at any cost....."  
"Drunkard" in a telegram to Maulana Azad and others.

11. Simla, June 27.—Headlines: "Grand Victory For The Congress."

"Jinnah Eats Humble Pie." "Non-League Muslims For The Executive Council."

12. Simla, June 27.—"Communists are acting as ambassadors of goodwill between contending parties."—A Special Correspondent.

13. Simla, June 27.—Headlines:—"Wavell Plan Gets Through."

14. San Francisco, June 25.—"Being interviewed Sir Ramaswami refused to comment on the developments in India. I have been reliably informed that he feels any comments he may make, are likely to be misunderstood and people in India may think his comments are "inspired." However I gather from the same source that he is most anxious to get back to India as soon as possible, and render any assistance that he could at this juncture. He considers it very unfortunate that both he and Sir Ardeshir Dalal were out of India at this stage. He feels both he and Sir Ardeshir, having practical experience in the Executive Council, could give sound advice in the interest of the country."

"He is reported to have said that he was not at all worried about the Viceroy's veto power. He asserts that if a man like him could hold his own under the present system . . . ."—A Special Representative.

15. New Delhi, July 3—Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, in an interview said:—

"I can only say that all circumstances, internal and international, including the Congress struggle, the impossibility of carrying on the Government without the support of the Congress and the people, have compelled the British Government to transfer power to India. Sooner or later, they had to adopt this course. This, they should have done earlier, as it is, in their own interest. But better late than

never. We should not go into the reasons why they chose this particular moment to transfer power."

16. New Delhi, July 4.—Headlines:—"Majority of Shias Not In Muslim League." "Hooseinbhoy Lalljee's Appeal To Viceroy For Protection."

17. Simla, July 5.—"As regards India's foreign policy and participation in war the Maulana had made it clear that, though the Congress would fully co-operate to bring about total unconditional surrender to Japan, it would be no party for the furtherance of Imperialistic designs of Western Powers in the Middle Eastern and Far Eastern countries. The Congress stood for freedom for all and as such she would demand freedom for the people of Burma, Malaya, Dutch East Indies, Iraq, Syria, Arabia and Iran."

18. Simla, July 11.—"Wavell Plan will go through, Despite Jinnah." "C.R. Gives two solid Reasons for Hope."

"But we have to put aside depression on the strength of two solid reasons. One is that the British plan was initiated with full knowledge of the intransigent attitude of the Muslim League and Lord Wavell, from the outset, had refused to give any assurance to the League Leader that nothing would be done unless he gave his consent. We have, therefore, reasons to hope for the plan to go through in spite of the League's attitude. The other ground is that, for the first time in Congress history, Congress leaders have thrown their whole weight into the plan and the British Government has every reason to put the Government of India on a firm and popular basis and end the present strain on Indo-British feeling."

19. Simla July 13.—"Mr. C. Rajagopalachari, in an interview to the Associated Press said: "It seems we had misunderstood Lord Wavell's purpose in summoning the Conference. If it was only to get Mr. Jinnah to agree, and failing it, we had to disperse, we would have told Lord Wavell that it would be waste of energy."

20. Simla, July 14.—"Lord Wavell ultimately must function within the limits of British policy. Congressmen must function within the limits of Indian nationalism and Indian

Independence. What Mr. Jinnah's urges and limitations are I am not competent to say."—Pandit Nehru.

21. Simla, July 15.—"Hindu Maha Sabha has a bright future in the political field as it advocates pure nationalism. ...."

"My own point of view, however, is entirely nationalistic . . . and my slogan is, "India first and communities afterwards."—Dr. N. B. Khare, on Simla Conference.

22. Agra, July 18.—"Mahatma Gandhi's special train had two third class coaches and a guard's coach."

London, July 20.—"—Gandhi-Like statement of Lord Wavell."—New Statesman & Nation.

23. Simla, July 20.—In a Review of the Conference—Special Correspondent writes, "There was much heart-breaking when the Congress panel was announced. Bhulabhai was left out—the man who made the Conference possible."

24. New Delhi, July 21.—"Certain proposals were evolved by Mr. G. M. Syed and Sheikh Abdul Majid, Muslim Leaguers from Sind and they discussed them with Mr. Asaf Ali, member of the Congress Working Committee, who was staying next door to them in the Cecil Hotel. The proposals, it is said, found favour with him and they were then discussed separately with Maulana Azad and Mr. Jinnah. All seemed inclined to favour them. The matter was pursued further and from "Armsdell" a telephone was put to Mr. Jinnah at the Cecil Hotel. "Any proposals?" enquired Pandit Pant on behalf of the Congress President.

"No. Any Proposals from the Congress?" retorted Mr. Jinnah.

"No," closed Pandit Pant.

Because none would take the authorship of the proposals and thereby lower the prestige, the proposals fell through."

25. Bombay, July 23.—"Some invisible hand" says Mr. Savarkar, "seems to have held back the hand of the Congressites with which they were going to sign a most humiliating anti-Hindu scheme."

26. Inside Dope—"According to available back stairs news service, the confounding of Mr. Jinnah was the most important thing that happened in Simla. One account states that at the first session of the Conference, after the Viceroy and the Maulana had spoken, the Quaid-e-Azam made his claim for dictatorial powers in respect of Muslim representation, thereby provoking both Dr. Khan Saheb and Major Khizar Hyat Khan to protest. This is reported to have made Mr. Jinnah so angry that his eloquence took on the appearance of inconsequent anger and illogical repetition of cliches. The assembled leaders are reported to have laughed—a kind of behaviour that no well brought up dictator can tolerate. Driven to further inconvenience, the Quaide Azam ended upon a note of inconclusive spluttering. When he was followed by Dr. Bannerji, Mr. Jinnah claimed the right to further self-expression, as his reasoning had not been complete. H. E. the President of the Conference permitted him further time. Mr. Jinnah used this to further himself into a gust of anger. Neither he, nor those who heard him were aware of what he was talking. But that was a matter of detail that should have been overlooked and was not. Again he sat down and again Dr. Bannerji got up whereupon Mr. Jinnah complained that he was being interrupted. Dr. Bannerji sought the protection of the Chair, complaining that it was he who was being interrupted. The President had to decide—After all he was the Saheb who had dedicated himself to work for peace in a room full of quarrelling Indians. And he awarded the decision in favour of Dr. Bannerji, thereby making it clear to Mr. Jinnah that the Viceregal veto in the future National Government might not always be in his favour. Every one tittered, and tittering certainly does not agree with the tempers of Quaide Azams."

Birbal in "Attitudes & Latitudes," on 21-7-'45, in the 'Bombay Chronicle.'



## APPENDIX I

### CRIPPS OFFER

"His Majesty's Government having considered the anxieties expressed in this country and in India as to the fulfilment of promises made in regard to the future of India, have decided to lay down in precise and clear terms the steps which they propose shall be taken for the earliest possible realization of self-government in India. The object is the creation of a new Indian Union which shall constitute a Dominion associated with the United Kingdom and other Dominions by a common allegiance to the Crown but equal to them in every respect, in no way subordinate in any aspect of its domestic and external affairs.

His Majesty's Government therefore make the following declaration :

(a) Immediately upon cessation of hostilities steps shall be taken to set up in India in manner described hereafter an elected body charged with the task of framing a new constitution for India.

(b) Provision shall be made as set out below, for participation of Indian States in the constitution-making body.

(c) His Majesty's Government undertake to accept and implement forthwith the constitution so framed subject only to :

I. The right of any province of British India that is not prepared to accept the new constitution, to retain its present constitutional position, provision being made for its subsequent accession if it so desires.

With such non-acceding provinces should they so desire, His Majesty's Government will be prepared to agree upon a new constitution giving them the same full status as the Indian Union and arrived at by a procedure analogous to that here laid down.

II. The signing of a treaty which shall be negotiated between His Majesty's Government and the constitution-

making body. This Treaty will cover all necessary matters arising out of the complete transfer of responsibility from British to Indian hands, it will make provision, in accordance with undertakings given by His Majesty's Government, for the protection of racial and religious minorities, but will not impose any restriction on the power of the Indian Union to decide in future its relationship to other member States of the British Commonwealth.

Whether or not an Indian State elects to adhere to the constitution it will be necessary to negotiate a revision of its treaty arrangements so far as this may be required in the new situation.

(d) The constitution-making body shall be composed as follows unless the leaders of Indian opinion in the principal communities agree upon some other form before the end of hostilities.

Immediately upon the result being known of provincial elections which will be necessary at the end of hostilities the entire membership of the Lower House of Provincial Legislatures shall, as a single electoral college, proceed to election of the constitution-making body by the system of proportional representation. This new body shall be in number about 1/10th of the number of the electoral college.

Indian States shall be invited to appoint representatives in the same proportion as to their total population as in the case of representatives of British India as a whole and with the same powers as British Indian members.

(e) During the critical period which now faces India and until the new constitution can be framed, His Majesty's Government must inevitably bear the responsibility for and retain the control and direction of the Defence of India as part of their world war effort but the task of organizing to the full the military, moral and material resources of India must be the responsibility of the Government of India with the co-operation of the peoples of India. His Majesty's Government desire and invite the immediate and effective participation of the leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people in the counsels of their country, of the Commonwealth and of the United Nations. Thus they will be

enabled to give their active and constructive help in the discharge of a task which is vast and essential for the future freedom of India."

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## APPENDIX II

### C. R. FORMULA:

1. Subject to the terms set out below as regards the constitution for 'Free India,' the Muslim League endorses the Indian demand for Independence and will co-operate with the Congress in the formation of a provisional interim Government for the transitional period.
2. After the termination of the war, a commission shall be appointed for demarcating contiguous districts in the north-west and east of India, wherein Muslim population is in majority. In the areas thus demarcated, a plebiscite of all the inhabitants held on the basis of adult suffrage or other practicable franchise shall ultimately decide the issue of separation from Hindustan. If the majority decide in favour of forming a sovereign State separate from Hindustan, such decision shall be given effect to, without prejudice to the right of district on the border to choose to join either State.
3. It will be open to all parties to advocate their points of view before the plebiscite is held.
4. In the event of separation mutual agreements shall be entered into for safeguarding defence, and commerce and communications and for other essential purposes.
5. Any transfer of population shall only be on an absolutely voluntary basis.
6. These terms shall be binding only in case of transfer by Britain of full power and responsibility for the Government of India.

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## APPENDIX III

### WAVELL-GANDHI CORRESPONDENCE.

The following telegrams were exchanged between the Viceroy and Mahatmaji.

**Telegram dated the 14th June, 1945 from the Viceroy to Gandhiji:**

"You may have heard my broadcast this evening. The text and that of the Secretary of State's simultaneous announcement in Parliament will appear in newspapers tomorrow.

"I hope you will agree to attend the Conference, which I have proposed. I have suggested 11 a.m. on 25th June at the Viceregal Lodge, Simla, for the first meeting.

"If you accept my invitation, I should welcome a discussion with you before the opening of the Conference and suggest, subject to your convenience 3 p.m. on the 24th June at Viceregal Lodge, Simla.

"I have arranged to make a bungalow called 'Dell,' available for you in the hope that you will accept."

**Telegram dated the 14th June, from Gandhiji to the Viceroy:**

"Have read in the Viceregal broadcast my name mentioned as an invitee. I have repeatedly made clear that I represent no institution. Therefore, I must not attend as representing the Congress. That function belongs to the Congress President or whomsoever he nominates. I send earliest intimation in order to avoid misunderstandings or misconception."

**Telegram dated the 15th June, 1945 from the Viceroy to Gandhiji:**

"Thanks for your telegram of 14th. Whatever the technical position may be I shall value your help and hope you will accept the invitation which was telegraphed to you last night. As regards representation of Congress, perhaps you will kindly let me have your final views after further considerations and any consultations you think necessary. I know you will appreciate the importance and difficulty of the task I have undertaken and do all you can to help."

**Telegram dated the 15th June, 1945 from Gandhiji to the Viceroy:**

"Received kind wire of invitation. For reasons given in my wire sent you last night, I have no place in your confe-

rence. As an individual I can only tender advice. May I then say that there are no caste and casteless Hindus who are at all politically minded? Therefore, the word rings untrue and offensive. Who will represent them at your table? Not Congress which seeks to represent without distinction all Indians who desire and work for independence. Hence the existence of Hindu Mahasabha claiming to represent Hindus as such. I apprehend that even that body will disclaim representing Caste Hindus.

Moreover broadcast seems rigorously to exclude use of word independence. Accordingly it seems to me to demand revision to bring it in line with modern Indian thought. I suggest publication four wires."

Telegram dated 16th June, 1945 from Gandhiji to the Viceroy:

"In reply to your telegram of yesterday, I am posting letter".

Telegram dated 16th June, 1945 from the Viceroy to Gandhiji.

"Many thanks for your telegram of 15th June. I have also seen your statement in today's newspapers.

"As regards your attendance at the Conference I will await your letter referred to in your telegram of June 16th which I have just received.

"I assure you term "Caste Hindus" was not used with offensive intention. Meaning is that there should be equality between Muslims and Hindus other than members of Scheduled Castes. Subject to this, exact composition of Council would of course have to be decided after discussion at Conference.

"On question of independence I invite your attention to Secretary of State's speech to Parliament on 14th June as published in Indian press. Following is the relevant passage which begins :—

"The offer of March, 1942, stands in its entirety. That offer is based on two main principles. First, no limit is set to India's freedom to decide her own destiny whether

as a free partner in the Commonwealth or even without it. Second, that this can only be achieved under a constitution or constitutions framed by Indians to which the main elements are consenting."

"It would not be practicable to modify the terms of my broadcast. This is only a simple statement on the proposals approved by His Majesty's Government, and my intention is to deal at the Conference itself with any points requiring clarification. I do not think it advisable to enter into detailed discussion before the Conference which I hope as you do yourself, will be held in a friendly atmosphere and without party bitterness.

As you suggest, I am releasing our telegrams to the Press."

The following is the text of correspondence between them:—

Letter dated 16th June, 1945, from Mr. M. K. Gandhi to H. E. the Viceroy:

"Dear Friend" I thank you for your telegram of yesterday received at 3-45 p.m. My second telegram acknowledging your kind telegraphic invitation evidently crossed yours. I am sending you this letter in reply, instead of wiring, because I am anxious that you should understand my position thoroughly. However, I am sending you a wire intimating the despatch of this letter. For ready reference, I am enclosing herewith a copy of my Press message which was issued yesterday in the morning. I would like you to go through it.

"While it is true that my position is technical, the reality of it is truer. My official and legal connection with the Congress was deliberately, and with consent of All-India Congress Committee, severed in order to enable me all the better to serve the common cause. This position, therefore, cannot be changed at will. In the forthcoming official Conference I can have no official position. My presence in it will change the official colour, unless I became an official representative of the Congress. But if you think that my help is desirable and that without being a mem-

ber of the Conference I am likely to be useful I shall make it a point to be at your service before and even during the Conference proceedings, assuming, of course, that the Working Committee wishes likewise.

"I want to cite an analogy. You may have known the late Deenabandhu, as C. F. Andrews was affectionately called by us. He severed his official connection with the Cambridge Mission and the Church in order to serve religion, India and humanity better. The position he occupied as a valuable link between India and England whether official or non-official and between all classes and parties, grew as days went. If I can, I would love to occupy such a position. It may never come to me. Man can but try.

You have suggested further consideration and consultation, both of which I have done. I am within an easy distance of Yeravda Central Prison, where Sirdar Vallabh-bhai Patel and Shri Shankarrao Deo were recently transferred from Ahmednagar Fort. Almost immediately after their discharge from the jail yesterday, they motored to Panchgani and are still with me. I have shown them all the necessary papers and they concur with me in what I am writing.

"In the task you have undertaken, of which I hope, I fully appreciate the difficulty and delicacy, you certainly need the assistance and goodwill of all the parties you can. The Congress help you naturally cannot have without the Congress being officially represented at your table. The first and also perhaps the main purpose of the discharge of the remaining members of the Working Committee will be frustrated unless you secure the presence at your table of the President of the Congress or whomsoever he and his Committee may appoint for the purpose. If my supposition is correct, my immediate advice is that you should invite the President of the Congress. I expect that the ban on the Congress has been or will be lifted to the extent it still exists.

I am, Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI."

Telegram dated 17th June from H. E. the Viceroy, to Mr. M. K. Gandhi:

Thank you for your letter of 15th June. I understand your position. I am looking forward to seeing you on 24th and hope means may be found for you to take part in Conference. I shall be grateful if you will communicate the following message to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad from me:

"I invite you to attend or to nominate duly authorised representative to attend conference at Viceregal Lodge, Simla at 10-30 a.m. on Monday 25th June. Accommodation will be arranged for representative if required."

"I have not released your letter or this telegram to the Press but have no objection to their being published."

Telegram dated the 17th June, from Mr. M. K. Gandhi, to H. E. the Viceroy:

"Deeply appreciate your wire received yesterday evening. In order to regularise the procedure and facilitate despatch of work without disturbing the number of members of the Conference, I suggest immediate invitation to Congress President to attend Conference or depute Congress nominee.

"If fixity of parity between Caste Hindus and Muslims is unchangeable religious division will become officially stereotyped on the eve of independence. Personally, I can never subscribe to it nor Congress if I know its mind. In spite of having overwhelmingly Hindu membership, Congress has striven to be purely political. I am quite capable of advising Congress to nominate all non-Hindus and most decidedly non-caste Hindus. You will quite unconsciously but equally surely defeat the purpose of the Conference, if parity between caste Hindus and Muslims is unalterable. Parity between Congress and League is ununderstandable. I am eager to help you and the British people, but not at the sacrifice of fundamental and universal principles. For, it will be no help. If you desire the text of yesterday's letter earlier, I can telegraph its contents."

Telegram dated 17th June from Mr. M. K. Gandhi, to H. E. the Viceroy:



"Many thanks for your prompt reply to my letter of 16th. But in the absence of reply to my wire of even date, you will admit that Congress position and mine remains uncertain. Hence I must not, even on your behalf invite the President without the acceptance of my necessary amendment. You will not, and cannot, according to your wire of 16th let the Conference discuss the question. Therefore to my great regret, I have taken no action on your wire under reply. The Working Committee has not still been called. Private telegraphic communication is tardy. Time appears to be against the date fixed by you. With all my willingness to help, I hope you will appreciate unavoidable delay. I suggest your altering the date and clarifying the issue raised by me and if the clarification is satisfactory, I am sending your invitation directly for avoiding delay. I should inform you that Congress Premiers are held up pending Working Committee's decision. I am not releasing these communications pending final decision. But in this you shall judge."

Telegram dated 18th June, from the H. E. the Viceroy to Mr. M. K. Gandhi:

"Thank you for your two telegrams of yesterday. I think, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad should have my invitation as soon as possible, and I have accordingly telegraphed it to him at Calcutta.

"Mr. Amery's statement in Parliament and my broadcast constitute terms of reference to Conference which I still hope will assemble at Simla on 25th. I clearly cannot change my broadcast and I have already told you, I do not think it desirable to discuss its details before the Conference. None of the persons or parties concerned is expected or required to accept or reject the proposals now. The only immediate question is whether the proposals are worth discussing at the Conference and it is to that question that an answer will be most helpful. I still think the Conference should assemble on 25th. It may last some time and delay before it begins will not improve prospects of success. I am releasing your letter of 18th June, my telegrams of 17th June and this telegram to the press."

Telegram dated June 18 from Mahatma Gandhi to H. E. the Viceroy:

The following is the full text of the telegram:

"Grateful for your prompt, frank and full reply and also for directly inviting the Maulana Saheb. Members, being free at the Conference to accept or reject the proposals, clears the ground for the invitees to attend the Conference. This leaves them free to discuss the 'pros' and 'cons' at the Conference.

"My objection to the inevitability of parity between Muslims and Caste Hindus stands. If that view is incapable of being altered by the British Government my advice to the Congress will be not to participate in the formation of an Executive Council.

"The Congress has never identified itself with Caste or non-caste Hindus and never can, even to gain independence, which will be one sided, untrue and suicidal. The Congress, to justify its existence for winning the independence of India, must remain for ever free to choose the best men and women from all castes and, I hope, always will. That it has for the sake of conciliating the minorities' chosen men to represent them though they have been less than best, redounds to its credit, but that can never be pleaded to justify or perpetuate distinction based on caste or creed. The Hindu Mahasabha is the body claiming to represent solely Hindu interests.

"Subject to the Working Committee's wishes, I shall hope to present myself at Simla on the 24th instant, but owing to my strong views you can cancel the engagement without the least offence. I expect that this wire and reply if any will be published. I am leaving for Poona on Tuesday at 2 p.m."

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## APPENDIX IV

### JINNAH-WAVELL CORRESPONDENCE

The following telegrams were exchanged between Mr. Jinnah and the Viceroy:

**Telegram from Lord Wavell dated New Delhi, June 14:**

"You may have heard my broadcast this evening. The text and that of the Secretary of State's simultaneous announcement in Parliament will appear in newspapers tomorrow. I hope you will agree to attend the Conference which I have proposed. I have suggested 11 a.m. on June 25, at Viceregal Lodge, Simla, for first meeting. If you accept my invitation I should welcome a discussion with you before opening Conference and suggest subject to your convenience 5 p.m. on June 24 at Viceregal Lodge, Simla. I have had accommodation reserved for you at Cecil Hotel in hope that you will accept.—Viceroy.

**Telegram from Mr. Jinnah to His Excellency Lord Wavell, dated June 15.**

"Your invitation June 14. Shall be glad meet you on June 24, for discussion but as regards your proposals particularly Conference require clarification which I hope, will be available at our meeting on June 24. This will enable me to consult my Working Committee in the light of such clarifications and decide upon our course of action. May I request you, therefore, to postpone date Conference for fortnight as time fixed is too short for a meeting of the Working Committee members all over India. I reciprocate your appeal for co-operation and goodwill and hope that the Muslim League will make its contribution to any just and reasonable interim provisional settlement. Please reply. Jinnah."

**The Viceroy in a telegram to Mr. Jinnah said:**

"I have now received your telegram to me of 15th June. I am grateful for your assurance of co-operation. My broadcast was a very simple statement of the proposals and my intention is to deal at the Conference itself with any points requiring clarification. I do not think it advisable to enter into detailed discussions before the Conference meets. I would, therefore, prefer to adhere to the date for opening of Conference on June 25 and hope that you will attend.

"Perhaps you could arrange for your Committee to meet in Simla on June 24. As your telegram has been published, I am sending this to press."

Mr. Jinnah sent the following telegram to the Viceroy:

"Received your telegram of 16th. I note that your intention is to deal at the Conference itself with any points requiring clarification. It, therefore, follows that till we have a complete picture of your proposals as details would be no less vital than the fundamentals, we shall not be able to deal with them. Until I know full details of the scheme and am in a position to place the entire scheme before my Working Committee, it will serve no useful purpose to convene the meeting. Further, I hope that you will understand that calling Working Committee meeting at Simla as suggested by you on or before 25th is fraught with difficulties. First, they will be kept waiting indefinitely till the Conference concludes. Second, it would not be easy for me to make arrangements for their suitable accommodation and travel from various provinces within the short time available. However, after my meeting you on 24th for discussion as suggested by you, I may be in a better position to understand the situation and arrange things accordingly."

The Viceroy sent the following telegram dated June 17 to Mr. Jinnah:

"Thank you for your telegram of June 16. May I take it (a) that you and others invited who are members of the Muslim League will attend the Conference on the 25th but (b) that you will wish to consult your Working Committee when the proposals have been made clear to you at the Conference. I suggest that a long adjournment of the Conference might be most inconvenient to others attending the Conference and that your Committee might meet in Simla before the end of June. I would do my best to arrange travel and accommodation. But accommodation is very difficult and if the members of your Committee can stay with friends to the greatest possible extent, I shall be obliged."

## WAVELL-JINNAH CORRESPONDENCE—LETTERS

The following is the text of the correspondence:

Letter from the Secretary to the Governor-General to Mr. Jinnah, dated Simla, June 29, '45:

"Dear Mr. Jinnah—The following is the action which His Excellency would like you to take, if after consultation with your Working Committee, you are able to accept the suggestion he made at this morning's meeting of the Conference.

1. To prepare and send him a list giving the names of members of the Muslim League who in your opinion could suitably be included in the proposed Executive Council. The number of names in this list should be not less than eight or more than 13.

2. If you think you can usefully suggest, for possible inclusion in the Executive Council, the names of persons of any community who are not members of the Muslim League, you are at liberty to add them to your list, keeping them distinct from the names of Muslim League members.

His Excellency's intention is to scrutinise the lists sent to him and to see whether, from them and possibly from additional names of his own, he can, on paper, form an Executive Council likely to be acceptable to the parties and to His Majesty's Government. If so, he will consult leaders, including yourself, and thereafter decide whether it is worth while making definite proposals to the Conference. Yours Sincerely, (Secretary)".

Letter from Mr. Jinnah to Lord Wavell, dated July 7, '45:

"Dear Lord Wavell, I placed before my Working Committee the suggestions made by Your Excellency at the last meeting of the Conference and communicated to me by your Private Secretary in his letter dated the 29th June, '45. The Working Committee, after careful consideration, desire me to convey to you their views which are:

1. With regard to your suggestion for submitting a panel of names of the members of the Muslim League for inclusion in the proposed Executive Council, the Working Committee desires to point out that when a similar pro-

posal was made by Your Excellency's predecessor, Lord Linlithgow, in connection with his offer of August '40, the Working Committee opposed it and, when its objections were brought to the notice of Lord Linlithgow, he dropped the proposal and suggested another alternative in his letter dated the 25th of September, '40, addressed to the President of the All-India Muslim League, an extract from which is given:

"I appreciate, however, the difficulties which, you made it clear to me, confronted you in connection with the formulation of the panel which I had earlier suggested to you, and in the light of our discussion I am content that the selection of representatives, while resting with the Governor-General, should be based in the case of the Muslim League (and, should they so desire, of the other parties to be represented in my Council) not on a panel formally submitted, but on confidential discussion between the leader of the party concerned and myself."

This alternative was acceptable to the Muslim League. The Working Committee is of the opinion that the procedure settled on the previous occasion should be followed in the present case so far as the Muslim League is concerned.

2. Further, the Working Committee is emphatically of the opinion that all the Muslim members of the proposed Executive Council should be chosen from the Muslim League, subject to a confidential discussion between Your Excellency and the President of the Muslim League, before they are finally recommended by you to the Crown for appointment.

The Working Committee feels very strongly on this point and regards it as one of the fundamental principles.

3. Besides the foregoing, certain other points were also discussed in the Working Committee, particularly the question of providing an effective safeguard against unfair decisions of the majority. While the Committee appreciated the remarks in the statement of the Secretary of State in the House of Commons that the power of veto will be exercised by the Viceroy to protect the minority interests,

it was felt that some other effective safeguards would be necessary in the interest of the smooth working of the interim arrangement. It was, however, thought that this question could be settled after the strength and the composition of the Executive Council was decided upon.

I have given in the above paragraphs the unanimous opinion of my Working Committee and I am ready and willing, if you so desire, to meet you and explain the reasons and the grounds for the decision arrived at by the Working Committee. Yours Sincerely (M. A. JINNAH).

Letter from Sir Evan Jenkins to Mr. Jinnah, dated July 9, '45:

"Dear Mr. Jinnah.—His Excellency asks me to thank you for your letter of 7th July, and to say that he will be glad to see you at 4 p.m. this afternoon, or later this afternoon, if that is more convenient to you. Perhaps you would be kind enough to ask your secretary to ring me up and confirm the time.—Yours Sincerely, E. M. Jenkins."

Letter from Lord Wavell to Mr. Jinnah, dated July 9, '45:

"Dear Mr. Jinnah,—At the end of our talk yesterday evening you said that I could make your problem easier if I replied in writing to your letter of 7th July. I do not think you expect any comment now on the first and third points in that letter. Our talks were concerned mainly with the second point, 'that all the Muslim members of the proposed Executive Council should be chosen from the Muslim League....Before they are finally recommended to the Crown for appointment.'

"I fully appreciate your difficulties, but regret that I am unable to give you the guarantee you wish, i.e., that all the Muslim members of the proposed new Council shall necessarily be members of the Muslim League. As I explained to you, I cannot commit myself to give similar guarantee to any other party. I have to attempt to form an Executive Council representative, competent, and generally acceptable. But of course I cannot compel any person or any party to co-operate in my own solution if they do not wish to do so.

"It will help me greatly if you will let me have names from the Muslim League and I sincerely hope you will do so. I asked for eight, but will certainly accept five if you do not wish to send more. You can consider later whether any solution I put forward is acceptable to you.

"During the next two or three years decisions of great importance will have to be taken by the Government of India, whatever its composition may be. These decisions—on demobilisation, economic development, taxation, trade and so on—cannot wait, and it is the hope of H.M.G. that the Executive Council responsible for them will be one in which the major political parties are represented. It will be, of course, my principal duty to see fairplay between all parties not only in the composition of the proposed Council but in its working. I need the active help of your colleagues and yourself, and I am sure you will give it to me. I have no objection to your showing this letter to your colleagues, but it is not intended for publication—Yours Sincerely (Wavell)."

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## APPENDIX V

### DESAI-LIAQUAT AGREEMENT

The text of the Desai-Liaquat formula:

(1) Congress and League agree to form an interim National Government on the following basis, within the framework of the present constitution:—

- (i) Congress and League to have an equal number of seats in the new Executive Council;
- (ii) In such a Government the claims of the Scheduled Caste and Sikh communities will not be ignored;
- (iii) The Commander-in-Chief to be an ex-Officio member of the Council.

(2) The Executive Council so constituted will not be a party to any measure which has not the support



of a majority of the elected members of the Central Legislature.

(3) Immediately after assuming office, the new Government will release all the members of the Working Committee and other Congressmen.

(4) After the formation of the Government in the Centre, in all the provinces now under Section 93, Congress-League coalition ministries will be formed.

(5) The Viceroy should be approached to make an offer to India on the above-mentioned lines.

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